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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide information about arts opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities, this publication describes Very Special Arts (VSA) program activities in the United States that are planned for the period of October 1, 1996, through September 30, 1997. The prospectus begins with an overview of the different types of VSA programs, including: the Arts for Children in Hospitals, VSA festivals, the Legacy Program, mentoring grants, the Very Special Arts Native American Initiative, the New Visions Dance Project, the Playwright Discovery Program, Start with the Arts, State Program Grants, VA/Very Special Arts Programs that provide art experiences to veterans at VA medical centers, VSA/IFF Career Development Festivals, Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute, Young Soloists Program, and the Very Special Arts Gallery. Following the overview, the VSA activities occurring in each state are reviewed. States are listed alphabetically with information provided on the address and telephone number of the director in each state, along with activity descriptions. A cross-referenced index of programs is also provided. (CR)

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Program Prospectus

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VERY SPECIAL ARTS®

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1997 Very Special Arts Program Prospectus

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Editor, Eileen R. Frueh
with assistance from Soula Antoniou, Director of Affiliate Services,
Christine Poward, Azura Hassan, John Spitzer, Debbie Forbes and Jen Sutton

Special Thanks to Cynthia Aldridge,
Director of Creative Services

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PREFACE

Very Special Arts is an international nonprofit organization that promotes arts, education and creative expression, involving children and adults with disabilities, thereby strengthening the human spirit and improving the quality of life for all.

Founded in 1974 by Jean Kennedy Smith as an affiliate of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the organization offers comprehensive programs in creative writing, dance, drama, music and the visual arts. These programs are implemented through a network of affiliates across the United States and in 86 countries around the world.

The 1997 Program Prospectus is a summary of Very Special Arts program activities in the United States, planned for the period October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997. This publication reflects the creativity and diversity of arts programs throughout the Very Special Arts network.

This publication may be a useful tool for the following audiences:

- The public seeking information about arts opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities, including the disability community, the arts community, parents and educators of children with disabilities and organizations serving people with disabilities;
- Disability and arts organizations, and funding institutions interested in collaborating with Very Special Arts affiliates;
- Individuals and organizations interested in volunteer opportunities through the Very Special Arts network;
- Very Special Arts affiliates interested in learning about programs conducted by other organizations in the network.

It is hoped that the sharing of this information encourages creativity, involvement and collaboration between Very Special Arts state affiliates across the country. This information is also available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.vsarts.org/.

Our thanks to the executive directors, board members and staff of Very Special Arts affiliates for their assistance in preparing this publication.

John D. Kemp, President and Chief Executive Officer
Barb Trader, Vice President of Programs
Soula Antoniou, Director of Affiliate Services

About Very Special Arts Programs

Very Special Arts programs are implemented through a network of local, state, national and international Very Special Arts organizations and affiliates, in collaboration with educational and cultural institutions, arts agencies, associations for people with disabilities, and health and rehabilitation organizations. Parents, volunteers, teachers, trainers, artists, health specialists and other experts play an important part in these programs. The Very Special Arts affiliates listed in this publication increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate fully in their communities through various programs and initiatives.

Very Special Arts' Program Development Department designs and initiates programs that affiliates choose to adapt or replicate in their own communities. These programs are described below:

Arts for Children in Hospitals — The Arts for Children in Hospitals program educates health care professionals about the importance of the arts as a communications tool with children. As part of this college-level course, medical students work side-by-side with their pediatric patients on art projects which build trust and encourage children to talk about their hospital experiences. First piloted at Georgetown University School of Medicine, the program is now offered at medical and nursing schools across the country.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Very Special Arts Festivals are organized on the state and local levels, in collaboration with schools, hospitals, recreation facilities and other community organizations.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. The Legacy Program is implemented in nursing homes and care facilities across the country.

Mentoring Grants — Very Special Arts awards mentoring grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas.

Native American Initiative — The Very Special Arts Native American Initiative provides opportunities for Native American children with disabilities to learn through exploring contemporary and traditional art forms. A collaborative effort between Very Special Arts and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the initiative promotes arts programming in BIA schools and culminates in a Native American Festival The 1997 National Native American Very Special Arts Festival is hosted by Very Special Arts Minnesota.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. These dance and creative movement workshops allow participants with disabilities to increase physical strength, self-esteem and self-discipline. Originally developed in cooperation with the Alvin Ailey Dance Center, the program is implemented by dance companies, ballet schools and recreational organizations across the country.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four- five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Start with the Arts is implemented in hundreds of early childhood classrooms across the country.

State Program Grants — Each year, Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The Veterans Administration/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festivals — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts coordinates the VSA/ITT Career Development Festivals at the ITT Technical Institutes across the country. The result of a national partnership between VSA and ITT Educational Services, Inc., these festivals provide young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills.

Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute — The Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute, named for visual artist and Very Special Arts supporter Hiro Yamagata, is a comprehensive program focusing on the creative learning process in the arts. Each year, artists with disabilities from around the world are selected as Yamagata Fellows to spend a week together exchanging ideas and sharing adaptive techniques in the visual arts. This week is followed by collaborative programming in the Fellows' home states or countries. All Very Special Arts affiliates are invited to nominate artists for participation.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company.

The **Very Special Arts Gallery in Washington, D.C.** represents emerging and professional artists with disabilities. Through a growing national Artists Registry of images and information on more than 800 artists with disabilities, the Very Special Arts Gallery provides direct service and access to some of the best art and artists in the world. The Gallery serves as an educational resource, providing visitors with information explaining the important role the arts play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. In addition, the Gallery functions as a resource for participating artists to gain experience the professional exhibitions process. This year, a second gallery, the **Very Special Arts Gallery West in Los Angeles, California** opened to expand Very Special Arts' mission and outreach to audiences on both coasts.

For more information about Very Special Arts, please contact the national office or your state affiliate.

Very Special Arts
1300 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Office: (800) 933-8721
Fax: (202) 737-0725
TTY: (202) 737-0645
web site: http://www.vsarts.org

VERY SPECIAL ARTS ALABAMA

Ms. Donna Gordon
President. Board of Directors
Very Special Arts Alabama
2430 11th Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35234
Office/Fax: (205) 979-4974

Arts for Children in Hospitals — The Arts for Children in Hospitals program educates health care professionals about the importance of the arts as a communications tool with children. As part of this college-level course, medical students work side-by-side with their pediatric patients on art projects which build trust and encourage children to talk about their hospital experiences. At the University of South Alabama Medical School, an instructor and guest artist lead medical students through arts activities which the students then conduct with young patients.

Auburn Art Project — In conjunction with Friends for Life, a support group for families, Very Special Arts Alabama-Auburn conducts monthly art programs for children with disabilities. Sessions are offered in music, dance and drama. This program is co-sponsored by VSA Alabama-Auburn, the Alabama State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and Friends for Life.

Creativity - A Natural Bridge — Every year, Very Special Arts Alabama sponsors "Creativity - A Natural Bridge," a statewide art show of works by approximately 325 Alabama artists with disabilities. The juried art show hangs in various public buildings and museums throughout the state. It is co-sponsored by VSA Alabama, Bell South, SouthTrust Bank, Regions Bank and AmSouth Bank and has an audience of approximately 2,500 people.

***dis*ABLED Gallery** — As an outgrowth of the "Creativity - A Natural Bridge" program, Very Special Arts Alabama exhibits artwork by 125 Alabama artists with disabilities year-round at the University of Alabama-Birmingham Spain Rehabilitation Center Art Gallery. The exhibit is managed by Barry Parks, an Alabama artist with disabilities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,700 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Alabama festivals in the following locations: Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Hueytown, Leeds and Mobile. These festivals reach an audience over 14,000 additional people.

Mayer Lighting Showroom Exhibition — As an outgrowth of the "Creativity - A Natural Bridge" program, Very Special Arts Alabama exhibits artwork by Alabama artists with disabilities at the Mayer Lighting Showroom. The works of art are viewed by an audience of over 4,000 people.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. These dance and creative movement workshops allow participants with disabilities to increase physical strength, self-esteem and self-discipline. VSA Alabama conducts New Visions Dance Classes for 60 participants with disabilities. The classes are also used as a component of a graduate level training program at the University of Alabama in Birmingham for teachers of students who have visual impairments. Trained project coordinators are employed by a local dance company and assistance is provided by classroom teachers, aides and volunteers from the Charity League.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. Each year, Very Special Arts Alabama invites students from 130 school districts in the state to submit their scripts for consideration at the national level.

Southern Exposure — Very Special Arts Alabama-Huntsville, in partnership with Parkway Mall and the Huntsville Art League, holds a reception and awards ceremony that kicks off a month long exhibit of local VSA Alabama artists for an audience of 5,000.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Alabama provides tailored Start with the Arts programs to 100 children with and without disabilities in Muscle Shoals, Selma and Birmingham. These programs are co-sponsored by the Metropolitan Arts Council of Birmingham.

Tuskegee Art — Very Special Arts Alabama-Tuskegee coordinator Barbara Danner offers several weekly art classes to 25 adults and students with disabilities in schools and community settings. At the end of classes, students exhibit their work at a local mall to an audience of 1,000. Many of the participants in this program have received honors in state art shows.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year VSA Alabama conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Alabama at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS ALASKA

Ms. Joy DeStefano Haines
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Alaska
621 W. Sixth Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
Office/TTY: (907) 263-2774
Fax: (907) 263-2776

Art and Healing Program (1997 Technical Assistance Grant) — Very Special Arts Alaska provides guided art activities for children in hospitals in collaboration with Providence Hospital in Anchorage. VSA Alaska provides artist/R.N. Catherine Doss and an "art cart" to transport visual art activities and materials for pediatric patients, their families and hospital staff. As a component to this project, VSA Alaska offers workshops to hospital staff, volunteers and nursing students on the important relationship between the arts and healing. Very Special Arts awards Technical Assistance Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Alaska, in cooperation with local school districts, offers artist residencies in several disciplines at eight local schools. The program benefits up to 600 students with and without disabilities.

"Between Two Worlds" — Very Special Arts Alaska, in partnership with the Autism Society of Alaska and Care Planners of Alaska (Alzheimer's Association), offers programs for children and adults who may not qualify for existing disability services.

Creative Writing Workshops — Very Special Arts Alaska provides poetry, fiction and visual arts workshops for people with mental illness. VSA Alaska brings in local writers to conduct creative writing workshops and readings.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 3,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Alaska festivals in Anchorage and Fairbanks. These festivals reach an audience over 5,000 additional people.

Ticket Outreach — Since 1991, Very Special Arts Alaska has served as a pass-through organization for donated tickets to local performing arts events. Through this program, low-income families with children who have disabilities receive tickets to performing arts events appropriate for children. Last year, VSA Alaska distributed 277 free tickets to families and anticipates a similar distribution level this year.

Transition through the Arts — Very Special Arts Alaska received a grant from the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to establish a one-year pilot project in partnership with local disability service organizations. With a Community Resource Team that includes disability service providers, people with mental illness, artists and local businesses, the organization provides workshops that teach social and career skills to teens and young adults, helping prepare them for transition from school to work or from institutional to independent living.

Visiting Artists — Very Special Arts Alaska, in partnership with Alaska Airlines, Reno Air, P.A.R.E.N.T.S. and state disability service providers, brings the Buen Viaje Dancers and Very Special Arts New Mexico dance trainers to Nome, Fairbanks and Anchorage for a series of workshops and performances. This dance program directly involves 1,000 children and adults with and without disabilities, and reaches an estimated audience of 2,000.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS ARIZONA

Ms. Barbara Yorkis
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Arizona
3321 N. Chapel Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85716
Office: (602) 795-6502
Fax: (602) 326-8470
email: vsaa@ix.netcom.com

Arts For Me Studio and Gallery — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. VSA Arizona operates a gallery in Tucson, providing instruction in all mediums for people with disabilities. During the day, gallery director Sharon Harrington provides programs for adults. In the afternoons, children of all ages are engaged in art activities with volunteer and paid artists. Works created by participants are displayed at the Arts for Me Gallery and other galleries in the local area.

Clay Tile Workshops — Very Special Arts Arizona provides opportunities for students with and without disabilities to create clay tile murals, benches, patios and ceramic works. Children at Gale Elementary School, Learning Plus Charter School, and Howenstine School receive instruction from artist Johanna Schneider. Students at the Arizona State School for the Blind receive instruction from artist Marilyn Draving.

Classical Ballet — Very Special Arts Arizona offers classical ballet classes to 40 students with and without disabilities at Corbett Elementary School. The classes incorporate Russian ballet training techniques and are underwritten by local businessman Jim Click, of the Society of Arts and Letters.

Dance Movement — Dance artist Sharon Utegaard leads a Very Special Arts Arizona dance movement program for 75 students with severe and profound disabilities at the Howenstine School, Learning Plus Charter School, and Myers Ganoung Elementary School. The students work in two groups, one with ambulatory abilities and the other without, to learn to express themselves through creative movement and physical expression.

Drawing Classes — Artist Donna Eyde offers drawing classes to 140 students with disabilities at charter high schools in Pima County, Pima County EDGE, Pima County Himmel Parks, and Learning Plus Charter School. In addition, drawing classes are offered to two classes of fifth graders with and without disabilities at Hughes Elementary School.

Face Casting — Artist Marilyn Draving works with 35 students who are blind and visually impaired in an arts program that Very Special Arts Arizona has been providing for the last six years. Students learn the variations of the human face and face casting skills using plaster gauze. Through the years, 60 famous faces of sports figures, celebrities and Arizona legislators have been cast.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,300 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Arizona's festival in Nogales. This festival reaches an audience over 1,200 additional people.

Native American Bead Working — Artist D'Ana Soto works with 20 students with disabilities to create Native American beadwork. Students are introduced to the various techniques of beading styles done by different tribal groups and experiment with the various methods of utilizing beads in creating works of art.

Opera Creation and Production — Dr. Carroll Rinehart works with special education teachers and students grades K-2 in weekly classes at five area schools to create and produce operas. Both first- and second-year level classes are offered. Two hundred students with and without disabilities write the stories, script the operas, create the arias, write the music, hold auditions, rehearse and stage the operas and present them to an audience of their peers. The operas are bilingual and are created from stories selected by the children. Peer audiences critique the pieces, changes are made, and a final presentation is given for an audience of 1,000 parents and others at the school.

Stained Glass Window Project — Very Special Arts Arizona, in partnership with the United Way and Nogales Public Schools, coordinates six distinct stained glass window classes at the first-, second- and third-year levels in classroom settings. Children with and without disabilities are taught the skills needed to work in the medium and collectively create stained glass windows. Under the leadership of artist Virginia Fisher, these classes feature field trips, videos on how glass is manufactured, experiments with fusing glass, kaleidoscope making, and finally creating a full sized window. Through this program, students at the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind have undertaken to create six very large windows for the fine arts performing center on campus. Last year, over 1,000 students participated in these programs.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS ARKANSAS

Ms. Azura Hassan
Grants Manager, Very Special Arts
1300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Office: (800) 933-8721
Fax: (202) 737-0725
TTY: (202) 737-0645
e-mail: azurah@vsarts.org

Very Special Arts is currently in the process of identifying exciting and innovative initiatives to serve people with disabilities in the state of Arkansas. Our goal is to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities by exploring relevant program partners and collaborating with arts, education and disability organizations.

Arts Workshops — Very Special Arts Arkansas conducts weekly multi-media arts workshops at the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center. Over 50 participants with disabilities of all ages receive professional art instruction and participate in group studio time. Exhibits of participants' artwork are displayed at various locations throughout the state during the year. A summer arts festival featuring the participants and their artwork is held as a culminating event to this year long program.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS CALIFORNIA

Ms. Mickey Shaw
Executive Director
Very Special Arts California
15241 Springdale Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92649
Office: (714) 494-5476
Fax: (714) 497-6190
e-mail: mickshaw@ix.netcom.com

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 10,800 people directly participate in Very Special Arts California festivals in the following locations: Chico, Costa Mesa, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oceanside, Palo Alto, Sacramento, Santa Ana, Santa Cruz, San Jose, San Francisco, Sausilito, Yuba City. These festivals reach an audience over 16,500 additional people.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. VSA California sponsors a 16-week program at the Valley Oaks Health Care Center in Gridley entitled "Memories in a Shoe Box." Working with an art therapist and a counselor, seniors with and without disabilities create shoe box assemblages which are publicly exhibited. Very Special Arts California received a 1997 VSA Legacy Program grant to conduct this program.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards Mentoring Grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. This year, VSA California is receiving training and guidance from VSA Utah in the area of gallery development. VSA California is drawing on VSA Utah's experience in public relations and marketing, financial management, merchandising, day-to-day gallery management, and integrating artists with disabilities into gallery exhibits and programs.

Multi-Arts Resource Guide Training — Very Special Arts California is conducting a two-day Multi-Arts Resource Guide teacher training workshop in cooperation with VSA Massachusetts. The Guide, developed by VSA Massachusetts, focuses on using the arts to support daily classroom activities for students of all abilities. The workshop is designed for regular and special education teachers, specialists and other support staff working with students with and without disabilities.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts California offers training for educators in adaptive techniques for teaching children with disabilities in integrated learning environments. This program culminates with an early childhood festival involving parents, young children, teachers and administrators.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The Veterans Administration/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. Very Special Arts California provides a ten-week artist residency program at the VA Medical Center in San Francisco.

Very Special Arts California Gallery — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. This year, VSA California is opening a gallery of artwork by artists with disabilities that will also include a children's corner, and an international corner of artwork created by participants in VSA International programs. The Gallery will provide workshops by professional artists, children's workshops, recitals by performing artists with disabilities and organized tours for community groups and schools.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS COLORADO

Ms. Laura Nigro
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Colorado
200 Grant Street, Suite 303C
Denver, CO 80203
Office: (303) 777-0797
Fax: (303) 778-6956
TTY: (303) 777-0798
e-mail: vsaco@ix.netcom.com

ABLExpressions 1997 — Very Special Arts Colorado hosts ABLExpressions, an art show and sale of works in diverse media to celebrate the artistic accomplishments of people with disabilities. In the interest of promoting "art for all," artists without disabilities are also sometimes represented. Proceeds from ABLExpressions benefit VSA Colorado's programs.

Art Initiative Scholarship Program — Very Special Arts Colorado identifies individuals with disabilities on low income to participate in arts appreciation classes and in career-oriented technical arts training classes throughout the Denver area. Scholarship money can be applied to help offset class fees, cost of access accommodations, class materials and transportation to and from class. The program engages individuals in the process of artistic exploration and creation. In addition, people with disabilities learn artistic skills and talents that will assist them in earning a livelihood.

Arts Access Technical Assistance and Advocacy — Very Special Arts Colorado provides accessibility assistance to over 50 arts organizations throughout the year. Consultations include on-site surveys to determine how facilities can be modified to provide better physical and programmatic access for people with disabilities. VSA Colorado also evaluates the accessibility plans of all arts organizations seeking grant awards from the Colorado Council on the Arts.

Dance Troupes and Classes — Very Special Arts Colorado supports four dance programs for people with and without disabilities of all ages. Weekly training includes both guided free-form kinesthetic expression and group rehearsal of choreographed material with occasional public performances. Through participation in these dance programs, students increase their physical strength, self-esteem and self-discipline. The Dancerz of the Sangre de Cristo Art Center in Pueblo are a particularly accomplished touring troupe that stages numerous dance performances at schools and civic centers throughout the state.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Thousands of people participate in Very Special Arts Colorado festivals each year.

Theatre Audio Description — Very Special Arts Colorado provides local theaters with audio description services. Via closed-circuit microphone, trained speakers describe visual stage elements such as set design, costumes, lighting and movement to theater patrons with visual impairments while the live performance takes place. Audio description helps people with visual impairments gain a fuller appreciation for the non-verbal action of theatrical productions. VSA Colorado audio describes 30-50 performances each year, ranging from Broadway extravaganzas to local repertory plays.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS CONNECTICUT

Ms. Julia Z. Wilcox
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Connecticut
56 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Office/Fax/TTY: (860) 236-3812
e-mail: vsact@ix.netcom.com

Artist Residencies — Since 1995, Very Special Arts Connecticut has sponsored visual arts workshops for adults with mental illness at the Gateway Counseling Center in Chester. Last year, the Gilead Mental Health Center was added as a site. The workshops are led by a professional artist with a disability and use a variety of media to engage participants.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 180 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Connecticut's Shoreline Festival at the Guilford Fair. This festival reaches an audience over 15,000 additional people.

Governor's Award Program — Very Special Arts Governor's Awards acknowledge and celebrate individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the arts or enhanced the cultural life of the community. The awards create and/or strengthen relationships between Very Special Arts and the political, cultural and educational communities of the city. VSA Connecticut's Governor's Awards are given annually to a teacher, an artist volunteer, an artist with a disability, an arts advocate, a business leader and a humanitarian.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. Very Special Arts Connecticut began implementing the Legacy Program in 1996, offering opportunities for senior citizens and teenagers to work together creating quilt squares. This year, the program continues and the quilt will be on display in the VSA Connecticut Gallery for the International Craft Exhibition.

Multi-Arts Resource Guide Program — Artist/educator Jayne DePole-Bogucki conducts teacher training workshops to introduce the Multi-Arts Resource Guide program to school districts throughout Connecticut. The Multi-Arts Resource

Guide and companion videos were developed by Very Special Arts Massachusetts to demonstrate how educators can integrate the arts into special and regular education class curriculum. Supported in part by a grant from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, Ms. DePole-Bogucki is VSA Connecticut's first Education Programming Coordinator and coordinates Multi-Arts Resource Guide workshops for 250 teachers on professional development days.

Music N' Motion — Very Special Arts Connecticut has initiated the Music N' Motion program to provide children, ages 4-10, with the opportunity to experience the joy of movement and the freedom of expression through dance and music. Children with disabilities receive first priority, but the program is open to all children. The program takes place at community centers and a variety of sites throughout the state.

New Haven Lead Safe Home and Community Health Project — Very Special Arts Connecticut collaborates with the New Haven Lead Safe Home and Community Health Project, founded by Ted Kennedy, Jr. at Yale University, to educate the public about the dangers of lead poisoning. The program uses the arts to teach children about lead poisoning and offers training to staff at the Child Life Office, Department of Pediatrics of the Yale School of Medicine.

Percussion Workshop — As part of the Art Saves Lives initiative of Very Special Arts Connecticut, percussion workshops are offered to at-risk children at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hartford to promote the arts as an alternative to drugs and violence. In the course of creating music and constructing their own percussion instruments, students discuss the life and death issues they face in their inner-city community. The Percussion Ensemble (complete with signature tee shirts, compliments of the Boys and Girls Club) performs at schools, city festivals and the VSA Connecticut Shoreline Festival at the Guilford Fair. The program reaches over 100 children, ages 9 to 13.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. This year, Very Special Arts Connecticut is sending an Education Programming Assistant and select artists to Start with the Arts institutes in an effort to introduce this program to early childhood classrooms throughout Connecticut.

Touring Art Exhibition — "From Within - Very Special Visions" is an exhibition featuring the creations of artists with disabilities. Following its debut at the Very Special Arts Connecticut Gallery, the exhibition will travel to venues throughout the state.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. In 1997, VSA Connecticut takes the VA program into its fourth year with artists-in-residence James Shanahan and Dennis Ward, both Vietnam veterans. They work with 370 patients and an additional 30 geriatric patients at the VA Medical Center in West Haven. Artwork created by veterans is displayed at various galleries and universities throughout the year. VSA Connecticut received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program to conduct this program.

Very Special Arts Connecticut Gallery — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. Located in Hartford Civic Center, the VSA Connecticut Gallery has been open since May, 1993, and is staffed weekdays 11:30 to 1:30 by volunteers, all of whom have disabilities. Hosting six exhibitions per year, the gallery showcases and sells work by artists with disabilities. The gallery serves as an introduction for artists to the arts community. A reception is planned for each exhibition to coincide with the First Thursday arts and entertainment district celebration promoted by the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS DELAWARE

Ms. Jennifer Taylor
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Delaware
University of Delaware
Willard Hall Education Building, 018-A
Newark, DE 19716-2940
Office: (302) 831-2084
Fax: (302) 831-2185
e-mail: vsadel@ix.netcom.com
web site: http://www.udel.edu/clyde/vsade.html

Art Awards — Each year, Very Special Arts Delaware sends nomination forms throughout the state offering the public the opportunity to recognize outstanding students and adults with disabilities in the visual and performing arts. The nominations are reviewed by a team of visual and performing arts professionals, and award recipients are announced in late spring. Award recipients receive a stipend to continue study in their artistic discipline and are invited to perform or exhibit at future festivals and programs. Award recipients with musical talent are often candidates for the Young Soloists Program.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Delaware places artists various sites throughout the state to teach visual and performing arts and to train staff in working with individuals with disabilities. VSA Delaware provides disability awareness training to each artist who participates. Over 500 individuals benefit yearly from these residencies and have opportunities to share their acquired skills at VSA Delaware festivals.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 3,400 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Delaware festivals in the following locations: Dover, Elsmere, and Georgetown and Smyrna.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts act ivies teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Delaware educators implement the Start with the Arts program at sites in New Castle County. In addition, VSA Delaware is working with a Head Start program to implement the program for the first time this year.

Theater Experiences — Very Special Arts Delaware sponsors an annual children's theatrical performance. Children and adults enjoy a musical that encourages audience members to interact or simply enjoy. The production facility is adapted for children with disabilities. This program is presented with assistance from the Delaware General Federation of Women's Clubs.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Delaware provides weekly arts training to 10-15 residents of the VA Medical Center in Wilmington. Artists work with 30 long-term care patients in creating works of art or a performance, which are then featured at the state VSA Delaware Festival in Dover. The program culminates in an annual on-site festival so that additional patients and guests can participate in arts activities. VSA Delaware received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program grant to conduct this project and has obtained other state and local grant support.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, Very Special Arts Delaware recognizes one artist for outstanding accomplishments in music by awarding a stipend to fund their music studies for a year and nominating them to represent VSA Delaware at the national level.

WASHINGTON VERY SPECIAL ARTS
(DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA)

Dr. L. Lawrence Riccio
Executive Director
Washington Very Special Arts
c/o Trinity College
125 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, D.C. 20017
Office: (202) 884-9040
Fax: (202) 232-7255
TTY: (202) 884-9041
e-mail: wvsa@wvsa.com

Art On The Move — The Art on the Move program offers artwork designed by youth with disabilities for exhibition and display in municipal offices, associations, schools, corporations and other organizations. Subscribers to the Art On The Move Program receive a rotating art show, including exhibition price lists, artwork identification cards and information about the artists. The program showcases and promotes awareness of the creative talents of artists with disabilities.

Administrator/Educator and Artist Training Conference and Outreach Program (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — Washington Very Special Arts will present an intensive one-day training conference that will prepare local artists and educators to work with children and youth with special needs in D.C. Public Schools. Conference participants will work in the schools with experienced WVSA artist-educators and classroom teachers. Key speakers and educators from the local arts and education community will present at the conference. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Arts and Humanities Directory — The Citywide Arts and Humanities Directory is an innovative teaching tool that allows teachers, parents, and other community members quick and easy access to cultural services and programs available to their students. This directory, the most complete catalog of its kind in Washington, D.C., helps local arts and humanities organizations collaborate on events or programs and build new strength through their partnership. The Directory is a one-volume, cross-indexed manual referencing over 200 arts and humanities organizations and will be available on the Internet in mid-1997.

artsJAM!* Gallery Employment Training** — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. Washington Very Special Arts' ***artsJAM! Gallery is an art gallery/training studio where youth with disabilities, ages 14-21, learn retail, customer service, entrepreneurial arts and other employment-related skills. The

artsJAM! Gallery offers job training through the arts, paid internships and placement assistance to youth.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,000 people directly participate in Washington Very Special Arts' annual Arts are Magic festival at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This festival reaches an audience of over 3,300 additional people.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards mentoring grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. For the second year, Washington Very Special Arts is receiving training and guidance from Very Special Arts Utah in the areas of board volunteer development, marketing and public awareness, and self-sustainment. WVSA is drawing on VSA Utah's experience in public relations and marketing, financial management, merchandising, day-to-day gallery management, and integrating artists with disabilities into gallery exhibits and programs.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS FLORIDA

Dr. Gay Drennon
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Florida
P.O. Box 10453
Tallahassee, FL 32302
Office: (813) 975-6962
Fax: (813) 975-6596
Toll Free: (888) 844-2787
TTY (Florida Relay Service): (800) 955-8771
e-mail: vsarts@typhoon.coedu.usf.edu
web site: http://www.coedu.usf.edu/~vsarts

Ability Project — In partnership with Abilities, Inc. and the Pinellas County Arts Council, Very Special Arts Florida conducts the Ability Project, an innovative project which focuses on the benefits of art therapy for people with traumatic brain injuries. Sessions are designed to contribute to research in this area with oversight and evaluation provided by Florida State University and the University of South Florida.

Accessibility Training Conferences — Very Special Arts Florida developed a series of accessibility training conferences to serve arts and cultural organizations by teaching them methods for expanding their programs to serve people with disabilities. The conferences include sessions on compliance the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and strategies for improving both physical and programmatic accessibility. Since 1995, in-service training has been conducted for museum staff, educators, and artists on the facilitation of school and museum accessibility programs for students with disabilities. Very Special Arts Florida also conducts accessibility training conferences focusing on museum accessibility and adaptive techniques for dance professionals.

Art Exhibitions — Very Special Arts Florida regularly displays artwork created by student artists with disabilities in galleries in Brevard, Dade, Hillsborough, Polk and Treasure Coast counties. These exhibits provide viewers the opportunity to appreciate the abilities of student artists and showcase the creative talents of artists with disabilities.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Florida supports artist residencies in nine counties. A long-standing partnership with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Palm Beach County Cultural Council and the Palm Beach County Department of Parks and Recreation allows VSA Florida artist residencies to reach underserved neighborhoods and after school programs.

Arts for a Complete Education — Very Special Arts Florida is a founding member of Arts for a Complete Education (A.C.E.), a unique consortium of professionals in the fields of arts, education, business, and community service that is based at the University of Central Florida and organized for the purpose of supporting and developing arts education. VSA Florida, in collaboration with A.C.E., develops and publishes an arts education curriculum guide for students with disabilities.

Arts for Children in Hospitals — The Arts for Children in Hospitals program educates health care professionals about the importance of the arts as a communication tool with children. As part of the college level course, medical students work side-by-side with their pediatric patients on art projects which build trust and encourage children to talk about their hospital experiences. Very Special Arts Florida implements the Arts for Children in Hospitals Program at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, University of South Florida Medical School and the University of Florida Medical School, and received a 1997 Arts for Children in Hospitals grant to expand the program to new sites.

Coffee Concerts — Very Special Arts Florida, in partnership with The Pinellas County Arts Council and The Pinellas County School Board, provides students and adults with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy coffee while learning and taking pleasure in concerts by leading performing arts groups in Tampa Bay throughout the year.

Combining Music, Dance, Drama, and Creative Writing — Very Special Arts Florida continues to implement Combining Music, Dance, Drama, and Creative Writing, a series of programs and workshops by ImproVision, a creative arts partnership of artists, instructors, and associates. The programs are designed for school projects, in-service teacher training, community group projects, corporate programs, and special events which include people with and without disabilities.

Crafts for the Senses — In partnership with Florida Craftsmen, Inc., three Crafts for the Senses exhibitions have been developed to display artwork created by people with disabilities using a multi-sensory approach to creating fine crafts. The exhibit Crafts for Senses I is currently housed in the Pinellas School System. The Crafts for the Senses II exhibition toured Florida and Georgia and was donated to the Cummer Museum in Jacksonville. The Crafts for the Senses III exhibition owned by Very Special Arts Florida, debuted at the Florida Craftsmen Gallery in St. Petersburg and is now touring statewide.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 26,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Florida festivals in the following locations: Bartow, Chiefland, Clearwater, Dade City, Daytona Beach, Flagler, Ft. Lauderdale, Gainesville,

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Jacksonville, Lake Worth, Manatee, Melbourne, Miami, Naples, Ocala, Okaloosa, Okeechobee, Orange Park, Orlando, Panama City, Pensacola, Port Charlotte, Sarasota, St. Lucie, Tallahassee, Tampa, Tanglewood, and Vero Beach.

Florida Institute for Art Education Collaborative Project — Very Special Arts Florida and the Florida Institute for Art Education, an affiliate of the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, are developing training resources and documenting the utilization of a discipline-based arts education model to use with students with disabilities. The goal of this project is to inspire the use of comprehensive approaches to art education for students with disabilities in classrooms, museums, and other learning environments.

Holiday Showcase Recital — Very Special Arts Florida- Palm Beach County presents their sixth annual Very Special Arts Holiday Showcase Recital at the Duncan Theater in Palm Beach. Over 100 children and adults with and without disabilities from Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties participate. The program includes a pre-show reception and silent auction that is open to the public. Talent recitals also occur in Daytona Beach, Cocoa Beach and Volusia County.

Juvenile Justice — Through a partnership with the Florida Department of Corrections and Florida State University, Very Special Arts Florida conducts the Arts for Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities program. The program is designed to teach inmate tolerance, personal and community resolution skills, and effective communication skills through creative drama. Four regional workshops, facilitated by Very Special Arts Florida, highlight existing programs and give technical assistance for resource development.

Kidstart Festival — In partnership with the John and Mable Ringling Museum, Very Special Arts Florida provides the opportunity for over 5,000 children and adults with and without disabilities to participate in Kidstart Festival, a multidisciplinary, multicultural festival. This day-long event encourages and welcomes children and adults to partake in workshops and demonstrations in visual and performing arts. In 1996, Kidstart Festivals are planned for the Cummer Museum in Jacksonville and the Miami Youth Museum.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. Very Special Arts Florida invites young people from school districts throughout the state to submit plays for national consideration.

Professional Development — Each year, Very Special Arts Florida conducts numerous professional development workshops on the arts, education, and disability awareness. Workshop topics address adaptive instructional techniques for visual art, dance, drama, music, and interdisciplinary projects. Throughout the year, 5,000 teachers use these training workshops to gain certification credit in 50 out of 67 counties in Florida.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. In 1993, Very Special Arts Florida was selected as a field test site for Start with the Arts, and implements a statewide curriculum along with pre-kindergarten teacher training, student mentorship and community festivals in Dade, Hillsborough, Leon, Orange, and Polk counties.

Very Special Arts Florida Gallery/Gift Shop — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. Through a partnership with the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach, the Very Special Arts Florida Gallery/Gift Shop opened in December 1995, featuring the work of national, state, and local artist with disabilities.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festival — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts Florida coordinates the VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institutes in Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Maitland and Tampa. The result of a national partnership between VSA and ITT Educational Services, Inc., these festivals provide young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, age 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloist Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electric Company. Each year, Very Special Arts Florida invites students across the state to submit entries for consideration at national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS GEORGIA

Mr. Scott L. Suprina
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Georgia
1904 Monroe Drive, #110
Atlanta, GA 30324
Office: (404) 892-3645, ext. 15
Fax: (404) 872-8924
TTY: (404) 892-4208
e-mail: slsvsag@ix.netcom.com

ACCESS Program — Very Special Arts Georgia's Arts, Cultural, Creative and Educational Services (ACCESS) program, is a series of disability awareness training workshops for artists, teachers, and presenters. The training includes an overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), adaptive arts techniques, and assistance in booking artists in educational settings.

ALIVE Series — Very Special Arts Georgia's Arts Liberate, Invigorate, Validate and Educate (ALIVE) series, a series of workshops and performances by professional artists with disabilities, is a statewide program funded by the Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Council for the Arts, and the Coca-Cola Foundation. The programs are tailored to the specific needs of each community and reach approximately 10,000 people throughout the state. Programs in the ALIVE series include:

Art Design - Several sites conduct a call for art related to the theme of their festivals. One piece is selected as the basis for the festival theme and is printed on T-shirts, invitations and programs. All of the artwork is exhibited at the festival.

Clay Art - Coordinated by VSA Georgia-Columbus, students from classes in Muscogee County enjoy workshops in clay sculpting by Ricky Murphy, a sculptor with a disability. He leads participants with and without disabilities through his techniques for sculpting small prehistoric creatures with clay.

Dancing on Air - VSA Georgia-Brunswick conducts Dancing on Air workshops at two schools. A teacher works with participants who have hearing impairments to create dances that incorporate creative movement, flag-waving and sign interpreters for lyrics that are performed as a part of VSA Georgia-Brunswick's festival.

Gracewood Puppeteers - The Gracewood State School and Hospital Puppeteers, a troupe of adults with disabilities, perform for over 1,000 students at the Ritz Theater in Brunswick. These educational and entertaining performances and workshops use unique electromechanical switches, pulleys and motors to manipulate the jaws of the troupe's intriguing puppets.

Harmonica Harmony - Mike Rogers, a musician who is blind, conducts harmonics workshops for elementary and middle school youth in several countries and districts throughout Georgia.

Musical Expressions - Well-known Georgia musicians, including Willy Moody and Fred Moss, conduct vocal and instrumental workshops for students and adults with disabilities. Their original songs are presented at VSA Georgia Festivals and at local schools.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 12,400 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Georgia festivals in the following locations: Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Columbus, Coralwood, Dublin, Ellijay, Griffin, Jonesboro, Lorenzo Benn, Milledgeville, Moultrie, Nashville, Newman, Sautee, Savannah, Thomasville, Tifton and Waycross.

Expressions — Very Special Arts Georgia's Expressions program provides ongoing exhibits of artwork by over 50 emerging and professional artists with disabilities in corporate offices, retail spaces, galleries and festivals to provide exposure and promote sales. All venues are open to the public and are accessible.

First Night Atlanta — Very Special Arts Georgia participates in First Night Atlanta, a community New Year celebration of visual and performing arts activities and events. First Night celebrations across the country broaden and deepen the public's appreciation of the arts through an affordable and accessible New Year's Eve program for families. VSA Georgia presents a stage of performances and an exhibit of artwork for an audience of over 1,000 viewers. This presentation of artists and artwork encourages inclusion and acceptance of the talents of individuals with disabilities.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) is selected for production at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA Georgia conducts play writing classes for students with disabilities, leading to the development of at least one play. Students are then encouraged to submit plays to Very Special Arts for national consideration.

Positive Motion — In partnership with the Shepard Center and the Atlanta Ballet, Very Special Arts Georgia presents ongoing weekly classes in integrated dance for 100 children and youth with and without disabilities. Classes are structured for both beginning and intermediate students. The program also provides lectures and demonstrations in the school system and performances for schools and festivals.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS HAWAII

Mr. John Posatiere
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Hawaii
111-A Kekili Street, #142
Kailua, HI 96734
Office/TTY: (808) 263-6199
Fax: (808) 261-3959
e-mail: johnp@aloha.net
web site: http://aloha.net/~johnp

Access Arts — Very Special Arts Hawaii provides interactive art activities for 200 children and adults with disabilities in special education classrooms, hospital settings and homeless centers throughout the state of Hawaii. Activities include painting, clay, music and creative movement activities. This program promotes advocacy for the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and fosters community awareness of the importance of the arts and cultural participation for all persons.

Arts in the Park — Very Special Arts Hawaii provides after-school interactive art activities for 300 children with and without disabilities at neighborhood parks throughout the state. Activities include painting, ceramics, crafts, and creative movement activities. This program provides integrated learning opportunities for children and promotes understanding between persons with and without disabilities.

Arts Resource Team for Special Education (ARTS) — Very Special Arts Hawaii provides interactive art activities for almost 400 children in special education classrooms throughout the state of Hawaii. Specialists in dance, drama, music, literature and the visual arts provide in-service training for teachers and conduct workshops for the students.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,550 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Hawaii festivals in the following locations: Honokiaia, Kauai, and Oahu.

Hawaii Arts Interchange — Through a collaboration with the State Foundation of Culture and the Arts, Very Special Arts Hawaii provides free tickets to theater, musical and other performing art events to over 2,000 people with disabilities and low-income families. This program makes it possible for people with and without disabilities to participate fully in community arts activities.

Internet Resources — Art and educational resources for people with and without disabilities are made available through Very Special Arts Hawaii's internet website located at http://www.aloha.net/~johnp or at http://hukilau.com/art. This resource provides agency program and service descriptions, calendar of events, contact information, a database of art and other resources for persons with disabilities, live arts chat opportunities, real-time art exhibits, artist links, art bookstores, real-time art news, downloadable software, and regional art organization newsletters. The site is currently serving more than 1,000 visitors per day.

Kids-on-the-Block — Kids-on-the-Block is an educational performance that utilizes puppet characters with and without disabilities to help children learn about disabilities. The show promotes open attitudes, explodes myths and misconceptions, and stresses that we are all unique individuals with a variety of skills. The show also encourages children to ask questions and talk about disabilities. For over 12 years, VSA Hawaii has sponsored Kids-on-the-Block performances at schools and other community settings. Each year over 10,000 people with and without disabilities participate in performances and discussions.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Hawaii teaches dance and movement skills to people with and without disabilities throughout the state of Hawaii.

Partners Project — Each year, Very Special Arts Hawaii offers intern opportunities to approximately 10 people with disabilities to work one-on-one with professional artists. Each intern is given 15 hours of guidance and instruction by the artist. The project culminates with an exhibition of the interns' work at an art gallery in Honolulu.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS IDAHO

Ms. Evelyn Mason
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Idaho
P.O. Box 1554
Boise, ID 83701-1554
Office: (208) 333-0122
Fax: (208) 333-0122 + *51·
e-mail: vsaidaho@ix.netcom.com

Festival — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Idaho's partnership with the Boise City Arts Council and the Boise City Parks and Recreation Department at the "Arts for Kids" Festival held in the Julia Davis Park. This festival reaches an audience of over 1,000 additional people.

Natural Occurring Art Experiences in Idaho Communities — Very Special Arts Idaho demonstrates how natural and community supports can be developed and established as a permanent way to include and promote people with disabilities in their community through the arts. Local arts councils and arts facilities are given opportunities and assistance in designing new, inclusive programs that fit their interests and local resources. The facilities are provided with funding of up to $1,500 per site, training on accessibility, and assistance in ensuring that their policies do not unknowingly prohibit people with disabilities from participating in art activities.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves nearly 80 people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Idaho's involvement began in 1995, and moves into three Boise schools this year. Dance teacher Mhari Wilson instructs children with disabilities at Ballet Idaho Academy of Dance and in area schools. The program provides an impact study and explores the possibility of making dance a permanent offering of the school system's Adaptive Physical Education activities.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. Through partnership with Idaho Theater for Youth and IJA Productions, Very Special Arts Idaho sponsors a workshop on inclusive theater led by Victoria Anne Lewis from the Mark Taper Forum, for educators, artists, and playwrights. In addition, the organization places writers-in-residence at three high schools to assist students with writing and performing plays. A statewide competition is held by IJA Productions, in which the finalists receive prizes and the opportunity to have their plays performed at Stage II, Boise State University.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festival — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts Idaho coordinates its third VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institute in Boise. The result of a national partnership between Very Special Arts and ITT Educational Services, Inc., this festival provides young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS ILLINOIS

Mr. Ronald J. DeBoer
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Illinois
52 Sunnyland Plaza
Washington, IL 61571
Office: (309) 745-9419
Fax: (309) 745-1936

Art A Go Go Project — Very Special Arts Illinois and Gallery A Go Go provide 300 students with and without disabilities from ten Chicago schools with hands-on arts activities. Schools and organizations involved in this project include the Ray Graham Learning Center, Schwab Rehabilitation Center, the Northside Learning Center, Lawrence Hall Youth Center, Solar House for the Blind, and the Agassiz School for Autistic Children.

Artist Unlimited Project — Visual artwork created by Very Special Arts Illinois participants is made available to hospitals and nursing homes throughout the state. Elementary students listen to audio tapes made by older adult residents about memorial events in their lives and create visual interpretations of those events which are then given to the residents. Over 500 students with and without disabilities in midwestern Illinois create artwork for this project.

Arts Access Television Network — Very Special Arts Illinois produces and directs a monthly television show to increase opportunities for people with disabilities throughout the state. Each broadcast includes interviews with artists with disabilities, footage of national programs and information on resources and events available through VSA Illinois. With a current viewership of 350,000, the project anticipates a statewide expansion by 1998 to include over 1,000,000 viewers.

Arts for All Training Team — Very Special Arts Illinois established the Arts for All Training Team to help foster ongoing programs and develop VSA Illinois programs in communities through the state. The Training Team includes a diverse group of parents, teachers, caregivers and community leaders committed to providing arts experiences for individuals with disabilities. A guidebook, "Arts for All...Making It Happen," is made available to all interested community members.

Arts for Children in Hospitals — The Arts for Children in Hospitals program educates health care professionals about the importance of the arts as a communications tool with children. As part of this college-level course, medical students work side-by-side with their pediatric patients on art projects which build trust and encourage children to talk about their hospital experiences. Very Special Arts Illinois conducts this program at St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria and at the Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital and Care Network in Chicago. Very Special Arts Illinois received a 1997 Arts for Children in Hospitals grant to conduct this program.

Arts Instruction — Very Special Arts Illinois offers year-round arts activities throughout the state to over 8,500 students and 7,000 adults with and without disabilities. Art programs such as painting, drawing sculpture, photography and the performing arts are conducted by professional artists, award-winning art educators, and music, art and recreational therapists.

Continuing Education Workshops — Very Special Arts Illinois offers a 36-hour Activity Orientation Program for activity directors of health care centers and community recreation leaders. The workshops provide hands-on learning experiences for effective activity programming, including training in life span changes, community integration, adaptive arts techniques, and program management for people with disabilities. Participants who complete the training meet the activity director qualification standards as an as set by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Courtside Chicago Art Project — Very Special Arts Illinois sponsors a series of art exhibits and related workshops in the Chicago area. 1996 exhibits include "Front Loading Foster Care," "Chances for Children" and "Youth Visions," featuring art by children with disabilities, as well as by children in foster care, adopted children and children with developmental disabilities. This project is a collaboration between VSA Illinois and the National Council of Juvenile and Court Judges, the Chicago Justice and Family Leadership Institute, and the Chicago Juvenile Court System.

Creative Journeys — Very Special Arts Illinois collaborates with Total Recreation Services to offer vacation trips for 75 adults with disabilities and their friends. Each vacation trip offers an arts event or component. Vacationers and volunteer escorts travel to events such as music festivals, cruises, tours of museums and theater camp trips.

Creative Spirit Project — Very Special Arts Illinois, in cooperation with the Association for Developmental Disabilities and the Peoria Area Arts and Sciences Council, trains 30 adults with disabilities to create artistic items that can be sold to help the participants attain economic self-sufficiency. As a component of this program, VSA Illinois is assisting with the establishment of a gallery for artists with disabilities in Eureka, Illinois.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Illinois festivals in the following locations: Champaign/Urbana, Creve Coeur, Danville, Evanston, Farmington, Glen Ellyn, Kankakee, Lincoln, Pekin, Peoria, Springfield, Vaudalia, and Waukegan. These festivals reach an audience over 1,400 additional people.

Heartland Alliance Gallery and Gift Shop — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. VSA Illinois operates the Heartland Alliance Gallery and Gift Shop at the Sunnyland Plaza in Washington, Illinois as a means of encouraging emerging and professional artists with disabilities to showcase their creative talents and artistic skills. Art sales benefit the artists throughout the state and help support other Heartland Alliance activities.

Leadership in the Adaptive Arts — The Very Special Arts Illinois-Heartland Alliance and the Peoria Area Arts and Sciences Council present a series of day-long workshops for caregivers, artists and parents who provide activities for people with disabilities. Workshops focus on elements of design, adaptive drawing, printmaking, papermaking, ceramics and sculpture.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors relieve training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. VSA Illinois sponsors New Visions Dance Classes for 75 students with disabilities in Jacksonville, Chicago, Kankakee and Springfield.

Project Camp Discovery — The Very Special Arts Illinois-Heartland Alliance coordinates a series of one-day art camps for children and adults with disabilities. Activities include paper making, weaving, print making, jewelry making and folk arts. Camps are offered in five counties through grants from the Peoria Area Arts and Sciences Council and the Benjamin J. Rosenthal Foundation.

Project R.O.T.A.T.E. — Very Special Arts Illinois' Project R.O.T.A.T.E. (Reaching Others Through Artists Travel and Education) provides opportunities for arts specialists in arts to network and share ideas for working with people with disabilities. A wide variety of professionals and specialists are brought together in conferences and seminars to share ideas and resources on integrating the arts into the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Resource Center — Program resources such as lesson and activity plans, art education manuals and grant writing guidebooks are available to the public through Very Special Arts Illinois' Resource Center. Over 1,500 individuals use the Resource Center annually. Located in Washington, the Center houses VSA Illinois materials and other supplies donated to the organization. VSA Illinois' quarterly newsletter, COMMUNIQUE, various posters and booklets are created and published by the Resource Center.

Seniors and the Arts — Very Special Arts Illinois provides arts workshops in creative writing, visual arts, music, dance and theater for 50 seniors with disabilities in East Peoria and Danville.

Theater Trunk — Professional theater artists provide workshops to over 100 people with and without disabilities using improvisational exercises, mirror-imaging, costume selection and performances. Workshops are designed both for people with disabilities and for teachers and caregivers. Through direct involvement and adaptive techniques, this program integrates persons with disabilities into the theater arts.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The Veterans Administration/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Illinois offers this program to over 150 veterans with disabilities at the VA Medical Center in Danville and to over 300 other veterans with disabilities throughout the state.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year VSA Illinois conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Illinois at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS CHICAGO
(ILLINOIS)

Ms. Amy Serpe
Project Director
Very Special Arts Chicago
Merchandise Mart
200 World Trade Center Chicago, Suite 493
Chicago, IL 60654
Office: (312) 527-2620
Fax: (312) 527-2609

ADA Anniversary Celebration — To celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, Very Special Arts Chicago is organizing an art program that will bring together children and adults with disabilities; their families and friends; organizations that serve people with disabilities; and the general public. The event, *Arts and Access: A Winning Combination*, invites people with disabilities to express through visual arts and writing how the ADA has positively affected their lives. Individuals submit works of art, essays, poems and stories to be reviewed by a panel of jurors. Five to eight pieces are selected for public display at select locations, and all of the works submitted are exhibited at commemorative event on July 26, 1997.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Chicago places artists to work in high schools and grammar schools with students with and without disabilities. Six artists provide a total of 96 sessions in a variety of arts-related disciplines. Nearly 200 students participate in this program which includes offerings in dance, musical theater performance, storytelling, music, poetry reading dramatization and mural making. The residencies culminate with an event at the Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, allowing the students to celebrate and share their work.

Needs Assessment — The Very Special Arts Chicago office opened in December, 1997 to provide arts programming to people with disabilities in the greater Chicago area. This year, the organization is conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to determine what programs and services Very Special Arts Chicago will provide during the next two years.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS INDIANA

Mr. Jim Nulty
Interim Director
Very Special Arts Indiana
1605 East 86th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46240
Office: (317) 253-5504
Fax: (317) 257-3628
TTY: (317) 253-5592
e-mail: vsa-in@ix.netcom.com

"Art of the Eye" Exhibition — Very Special Arts Indiana partners with Clowes Hall at Butler University and the Alumnae Chapter of Delta Gamma to present an exhibit that showcases the achievements of artists who have visual impairments. The exhibit includes related activities such as school performances, educator workshops, lecture/demonstrations and distance learning sessions that cultivate and foster future arts audiences of all abilities.

Artist Directory — Very Special Arts Indiana is developing an artist directory with detailed information about participatory activities that inspire and teach through the arts. The publication will be used by educators, arts leaders, and professionals who work with children and adults with disabilities and other underserved populations. The directory connects experienced artists with people who need their services and increases opportunities for arts residencies, workshops, special events and professional training.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Indiana partners with the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana Arts Commission to bring artist residencies to 17 local schools, hospitals and developmental centers. Over 3,000 children and adults with and without disabilities receive instruction and participate in workshops in drama, visual art, dance and music through this program.

Audio Description Program — For the second year, Very Special Arts Indiana promotes audio description to theaters, performing arts centers, museums and historic sites. Audio describers relate all the visual aspects of live performances and other events, such as costume and set design elements, to people with visual disabilities. Several Indiana theaters and performance halls are now offering audio description and Braille programs since VSA Indiana's training workshop 1996.

Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels — VSA Indiana partners with Clowes Hall to bring the Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels to Indiana for workshops and performances. The Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels are a premiere professional dance troupe of individuals with and without disabilities. The Dancing Wheels lead a teachers workshop and present a student matinee for an audience of over 800 children and adults with and without disabilities.

Colors of the Wild - Brazil Exchange — Since 1995, Very Special Arts Indiana has collaborated with the Indianapolis Zoo to further arts, education, disability awareness and inclusion. This environmentally-themed project involves curriculum development for over 8,000 students with and without disabilities. This year, over 20 children's' works are being shipped to Brazil, accompanied by VSA Indiana's Program Director, Celia Yohman, who will speak on the project and conduct art workshops. The artwork will be displayed in Brazil's Natural Science Museum along with 30 works by Brazilian children with and without disabilities. The program also brings a Brazilian guest to Indiana who brings Brazilian artwork, lectures and conducts workshops.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,800 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Indiana festivals in the following locations: Evansville, Ft. Wayne, Hammond, Indianapolis, Muncie, and South Bend.

Indianapolis Opera Ensemble Residency — Very Special Arts Indiana sponsors an Indianapolis Opera Ensemble outreach project at the Harcourt Elementary School in Indianapolis. Over 40 students with and without disabilities are involved in the project as members of the opera chorus, and 60 more are involved in developing sets and props. This year's offering, "The Pirates of Penzance," estimates an audience of 800.

Lolly Project — Very Special Arts Indiana's Lolly Project, created with the Delta Chapter of Psi Iota Xi Sorority, and named in remembrance of special education teacher Lolly Albert, offers monthly visits to pediatric patients at the Riley Hospital for Children. Children at the hospital are given the opportunity to select and frame an art reproduction from the National Gallery of Art to decorate their rooms. Each child is engaged in conversation, given an activity sheet and ideas for projects, and art supplies for their bedside.

Mini-Grants — Very Special Arts Indiana offers mini-grants to local schools and communities for local projects involving individuals with disabilities which have local support but which do not have full financing. Mini-grants this year include: sponsoring a mime to work with preschool students with communication disorders; providing audio description training for north central Indiana; beginning a volunteer arts and crafts program at a nursing home; and developing a disability awareness children's coloring book. Over 6,000 children and adults with and without disabilities benefit from VSA Indiana's Mini-Grants Program.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. The VSA Indiana New Visions Dance Troupe is comprised of 12 children with disabilities. The troupe performs at local schools, churches, education conferences and the Central Indiana VSA Indiana Festival each year to an audience of 800.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festival — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts Indiana coordinates its seventh VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institute in Indianapolis. The result of a national partnership between Very Special Arts and ITT Educational Services, Inc., this festival provides 250 young adults with disabilities with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. VSA Indiana distributes Young Soloists application materials to schools throughout the state and encourages students to participate in the program on the national level.

Youth Art - Disability Awareness Month Collaboration — Very Special Arts Indiana brings together the Arts Education Association of Indiana and the Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities to celebrate March as both Youth Art Month and Disability Awareness Month. Thirty-one teachers participate in a workshop and a performance of the Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels. This year's theme is "Arts for All." The month-long series of events, including in-school workshops, reaches an audience of 50,000.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS IOWA

Ms. Susan Jensen
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building/3EN
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146
Office: (515) 281-3179
Fax: (515) 242-6025

Accessibility Hour — An accessibility hour for people with disabilities will be held at this year's Des Moines Art Center Art in the Park event.

Artist Support — Very Special Arts Iowa creates biographical information sheets for nearly 70 artists with disabilities to assist them in the promotion of their work. VSA Iowa also creates opportunities for artists with disabilities to display their talents at fairs and shops such as the annual Art in the Park celebration held in conjunction with the Des Moines Art Center and the Artists Emporium in downtown Des Moines.

Arts for Children Program — The Arts for Children program provides training to educators on using the arts to teach academic and social skills to children with disabilities. This is a 15-hour course and is available for graduate credit. Upon completing the course, educators engage in follow-up residencies in their schools with a Very Special Arts artist. This year, the focus is on how the brain functions, as well as exploring practical methods for increasing creativity in all students. Over 3,500 children with and without disabilities benefit from this project.

Building Bridges Day — Very Special Arts Iowa, in partnership with the Citizens Disability Council and the Central Iowa Center for Independent Living, presents "Building Bridges: Pathways to Accessibility," a day-long event held at the Iowa State Fair to inform the public about organizations in Iowa serving those with disabilities. VSA Iowa sponsors hands-on arts activities, performances and information tables. Thirty-five organizations and 500 children with and without disabilities participate in this event.

Ceramics Classes — Very Special Arts Iowa provides ceramic classes to children with disabilities, ages 8-12, at the Des Moines Arts Center. The classes are led by a teacher who has participated extensively in VSA Iowa training and activities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 7,600 people directly participate in Very

Special Arts Iowa festivals in the following locations: Ankeny, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Dubuque. These festivals reach an audience over 180,000 additional people.

Jacque Meritt Founder's Scholarship — Very Special Arts Iowa is establishing an annual scholarship award to student or adult with a disability to further his or her involvement in the arts. The fund was formed by donations in the memory of VSA Iowa founder Jacque Meritt.

KidsFest — KidsFest, an event celebrating the child, is held annually at the Convention Center in Des Moines. Very Special Arts Iowa has a booth at this large children's event to provide public awareness of the value of the arts for people with disabilities. At the booth, 500 children of all ages and abilities participate in hands-on art activities.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. The Very Special Arts Iowa New Visions Dance Project takes place during the summer with two one-week sessions led by a professional dance teacher. Classes are open to children with any disability, ages 7-21. Another New Visions Dance Class will be held in conjunction with the Donna Reed Festival, held in Denison, Iowa in June.

Special Projects Granting Program — Each year, Very Special Arts Iowa's Special Projects Granting Program provides funding opportunities to organizations, facilities, schools and individuals who submit proposals for activities such as performances, art projects, and training for people with and without disabilities. Previous grants have included mime performances, puppet shows, and artist residency programs.

Traveling Arts Show — Artworks by 30 artists with disabilities are selected for inclusion in an exhibit which travels to several locations in the Des Moines area. The works are available for sale, and the show reinforces the talent and professionalism of Iowa artists with disabilities.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Iowa conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent the organization at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS KANSAS

Address before August 1997:
Ms. Beverly Dick
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Kansas
334 N. Topeka, Suite 104
Wichita, KS 67202-2410
Office: (316) 262-8184
Fax: (316) 264-2233
e-mail: vsak@ix.netcom.com

Address after August 1997:
Ms. Beverly Dick
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Kansas
829 N. Market Street
Wichita, KS 67214
Office: (316) 262-8184
Fax: (316) 264-2233
e-mail: vsak@ix.netcom.com

Adopt-a-School — In cooperation with the Wichita Public Schools System, Very Special Arts Kansas "adopts" students with disabilities and provides them with art supplies and teacher training on a monthly basis. In addition, volunteers are available to assist with art programs in the public schools.

Crisis Center Programs — Very Special Arts Kansas places artists, educators and volunteers to work with residents of local women's crisis centers. Through participation in the program, residents of the centers learn life skills, communication skills and appropriate expression of intense emotions.

Festival — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 1,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Kansas' festival and multicultural celebration at Kansas Newman College. This year's festival includes a statewide art exhibit.

Governor's Art Exhibit — Very Special Arts Kansas sponsors an annual year-long Governor's Art Exhibit of works by 25 professional artists with disabilities at the State Capitol and offices of Governor Bill Graves. This exhibit is chaired by Linda Graves, first lady of the state of Kansas.

Kansas Accessible Gallery (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. VSA Kansas moves to a new space including a gallery, gift shop and offices in fall 1997. The organization received a 1997 State Program Grant to fund supplies, art exhibits and workshops for the gallery opening. The gallery focuses on providing exhibit, sales and educational programs and services for artists with disabilities. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Kansas conducts the Start with the Arts program at the Wichita Art Museum and the Booth Early Childhood Center in Wichita, Kansas.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Kansas coordinates a 10-week visual arts residency for 100 veterans with disabilities at the Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center in Topeka and the Wichita Veterans Hospital. VSA Kansas received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program to conduct this program.

Volunteers in Schools — Very Special Arts Kansas places trained volunteers in the schools to meet once a week with students with disabilities, and to assist them in participating fully in art classes. Interns also assist public schools, university and libraries in making their programs accessible to people with disabilities.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS KENTUCKY

Ms. Ginny Miller
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Kentucky
824 Ironwood Drive
Bowling Green, KY 42103
Office/Fax/TTY: (502) 781-0872
e-mail: gmvsaky@premiernet.net

Call for Art — Very Special Arts Kentucky distributes a statewide call for art to schools and local media, inviting people with disabilities to submit artwork for inclusion in traveling exhibits, calendars and notecards. This year, the program includes a special component in partnership with the first lady of the state. VSA Kentucky and the first lady will select one piece of student artwork from each of the eight regions of the state for a special exhibition. The student artists will be honored at an awards luncheon.

Camp With the Arts — In a partnership with the Bowing Green Housing Authority, Very Special Arts Kentucky coordinates an art camp designed to introduce various art forms to nearly 200 students with and without disabilities who live in public housing. Classes are offered in drama, dance, music, drawing, animation, batik and printmaking. The three day camp culminates with performances, an art exhibition and a presentation of certificates and special awards.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 3,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Kentucky festivals in the following locations: Bowling Green, Elizabethtown, Huntington, Lexington, and Louisville.

It Can't Happen to Me — Very Special Arts Kentucky is creating a 12-minute HIV/AIDS awareness video project which targets students in grades 8-up. The video features a series of conversations with HIV patients in the state of Kentucky to help health educators across the state to enhance their education programs. This year, VSA Kentucky plans to lengthen the video so that it can air during prime time across the state.

Kentucky Educator's Conference — Each year, Very Special Arts Kentucky participates in the Exceptional Children's Conference, sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education, Special Children's Services Office, for teachers, administrators and parents of children with disabilities. VSA Kentucky participates in this conference by conducting two workshops: Creative Strategies for Special Needs Students for all teachers, parents and administrators; and Start with the Arts for preschool teachers, administrators and parents. VSA Kentucky also hosts a reception and an art exhibit, providing entertainment from VSA Kentucky's participants during the three-day conference. Approximately 2,000 school personnel attend this event.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. Very Special Arts Kentucky facilitates the gathering of oral histories from seniors which are combined with old newspaper accounts and letters to develop a theater piece, directed and produced by artists and personnel with Public Theater of Kentucky. The theater performance will be video-taped by Western Kentucky University public television, and copies of the video tapes, transcription tapes, and other materials are provided to all participants.

Mini-Grants to Public Schools — Since 1994, Very Special Arts Kentucky has provided $1,000 grants to schools across the state to develop arts programs that include students with disabilities. Many of the outstanding projects are highlighted during the annual Exceptional Children's Conference.

Playwright Discovery Program —The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA Kentucky offers assistance to students who are interested in participating in this program through workshops, readings, critiques, and play writing seminars. Students are encouraged to submit plays for national consideration.

"Shakespeare Behind Bars" — Very Special Arts Kentucky and the Kentucky Shakespeare Company conduct weekly workshops in drama for 15 inmates with and without disabilities at the Luther Luckett Correctional Facility in La Grange. The program culminates in a drama performance at the correctional facility.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Kentucky offers Start with the Arts training workshops during the year to Kentucky teachers, teaching assistants, administrators, and parents.

Traveling Art Exhibit — Since 1993, Very Special Arts Kentucky has displayed an exhibit of work by artists with disabilities during the Capitol Arts Center's First Night celebration. The exhibit is comprised of 25-30 pieces of artwork created by students and adults with disabilities. The exhibit travels to local communities throughout the state, with framing provided by The Kentucky Colonels Good Works Programs.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Kentucky conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Kentucky at the national level. VSA Kentucky also invites the Kentucky Young Soloist of the Year to perform during the annual Exceptional Children's Conference.

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VERY SPECIAL ARTS LOUISIANA

Ms. Mazie Malveaux
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Louisiana
Department of Education
2758-C Brightside Lane, Bldg. B-3
Baton Rouge, LA 70820
Office: (504) 763-3933
Fax: (504) 763-3937
e-mail: mmalveaux@mail.doe.state.la.us

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Louisiana selects eight artists from the north, central, southern, and eastern regions of the state to provide instruction in music, dance, drama and the visual arts in schools statewide. Approximately 750 students with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in arts activities under the direction of professional artists.

Creative Ticket for Student Success — Very Special Arts Louisiana has teamed with the Louisiana Alliance for Arts in Education and the Baton Rouge Arts Council to promote the Creative Ticket for Student Success campaign in Louisiana. This campaign is being initiated across the United States by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to create awareness for the value of the arts as an essential component of K-12 education and a key to student success.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 17,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Louisiana festivals in the following cities and parishes: Acadia, Assumption, Bossier, Caddo, Calcasieu, Catahoula, Concordia, East Baton Rouge, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, LaFourche, LaSalle, Livingston, Monroe, Natchitoches, Plaquemines, Richland, Sabine, St. Tammany, Vermilion, West Baton Rouge and Winn.

International Exchange Program — The Very Special Arts Louisiana/Very Special Arts Italy Exchange Program was developed in 1989, prior to the first International Very Special Arts Festival held in Washington, D.C. The relationship between Very Special Arts Louisiana and Very Special Arts Italy provides the two organizations with the opportunity to exchange administrators, teachers, VSA board members, participants and their parents. Italian students with disabilities and their parents visit VSA Louisiana program sites each year.

International Learning and Technology Center — The International Learning and Technology Center was created to increase the use of technology in delivering quality arts-related learning experiences to people with disabilities. Located on the campus of the Louisiana School for the Deaf, the center includes a multi-media laboratory with computer classrooms, assistive technology demonstration facilities, and a resource library. Workshops at the center provide hands-on arts and technology experiences for teachers, parents and students.

Louisiana Super Conference on Special Education — The Super Conference on Special Education is an annual three-day conference at which Very Special Arts Louisiana sponsors workshops and presentations conducted by artists and art educators. Eighty in-service and pre-service teachers, parents, administrators, and other interested participants gain insight on how to provide arts opportunities to students with disabilities.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. Over 100 students participate in the Playwright Discovery Program in Louisiana and are encouraged to submit scripts for national consideration.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. VSA Louisiana introduces Start with the Arts programming to children with disabilities in local school systems this year.

Summer Arts Institute — Very Special Arts Louisiana provides statewide in-service training and resources in the arts to regular and special educators upon request. In addition, Very Special Arts Louisiana holds teacher training institutes each summer in four areas of the state. The objectives of these institutes are to train teachers to provide arts experiences to students with disabilities; to foster dissemination of ideas and skills among regular and special educators; and to develop a trained group of teachers for potential statewide resources and in-service assistance.

Youth Arts Council of America — Since 1977, the Youth Arts Council of America (YACA) has participated in Very Special Arts Louisiana's festival programs in St. Martin, East Baton Rouge and Vernon Parishes, Beaux Bridge and Baton Rouge. YACA is a nationwide art club for teenagers. For the 16th year, high school students are conducting various arts activities at district, regional and state festivals throughout Louisiana.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MAINE

Mr. David Webster
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Maine
P.O. Box 4002
Portland, ME 04101
Office/TTY: (207) 761-3861
Fax: (207) 761-4740
e-mail: meart4al@saturn.caps.maine.edu

Access Art Team — Very Special Arts Maine's Access Art Team consults with schools on a variety of topics, including the use of multiple intelligences, inclusion methods and the development of cross-curriculum teaching strategies. The team provides hands-on workshops and training to 350 education professionals at the annual Winter Retreat Teacher Training Conference. Through an open studio, the team demonstrates how the arts can be applied to different curricular areas, and helps teachers develop a familiarity with arts programming and materials they can bring back to the classroom.

"An American Collection" at Maine Capitol — Very Special Arts Maine is bringing "An American Collection," a juried touring exhibition curated by the national Very Special Arts Gallery to Danforth Gallery in Portland, where related panel discussions on disability culture took place, and the tour proceded to Governor's State House Gallery. The exhibition includes an opening reception by Governor Angus S. King and First Lady Mary J. Herman, and will attract over 5,000 viewers during its stay.

Artist in Training Internships — Very Special Arts Maine and the art in-service coordinator at the Maine College of Art provide training to all art in-service students at the College. Two students at the college are selected as interns, trained by VSA Maine, and placed in schools to serve as artists in residence, bringing arts experience to over 600 students with and without disabilities. The interns receive both pay and college credit for their participation in this program.

Arts Every Day Conference — In conjunction with the Maine Alliance for Arts Education, the Very Special Arts Maine Art Team members conduct workshops at several conferences for hundreds of art educators on the use of the arts and multiple intelligence, as well as alternative teaching methods to reach all students.

Arts in Education Month — Very Special Arts Maine collaborates with the Maine Alliance for Arts Education to raise public awareness of the value of the arts and arts education by celebrating Arts in Education Month. VSA Maine worked directly with local sites around the state to promote Arts in Education Month.

Arundel and Portland Schools and Smart Residencies — Very Special Arts Maine, in partnership with the Arundel and Portland School Departments and the Maine

Department of Education, presents artist-led workshops for almost 400 students, K-8, with and without disabilities throughout the school year. Artists meet with teachers to plan activities which complement the curriculum and integrate the multiple intelligences approach and learning results. The residency will include all students with disabilities in the school into general art workshops.

Arts for Children in Hospitals — Through a grant from Sabre Corporation, VSA Maine provides artists in residence on the pediatrics floor of Maine Medical Center and conducts a training program for nursing students at the University of Southern Maine. In the summer, nursing students and VSA Maine artists work at Camp Sunshine, a camp for families with children with severe illnesses.

Camp Susan Curtis — Through a grant from Sabre Corporation, Very Special Arts Maine conducts four-week-long arts sessions at Camp Susan Curtis, a camp serving 500 low-income children with and without disabilities. Very Special Arts Maine provides an artist in residence to work directly with each child twice during each session, helps staff plan additional activities, and conducts training for each staff person.

Caring For Ourselves Conference — In conjunction with the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council, VSA Maine conducts hands-on workshops in poetry, handmade bookmaking, sculpture, and methods for developing home arts workshops for 300 people with and without disabilities. The workshop also encourages families with members who have disabilities to network and advocate for the cultural resources of their communities to be made accessible and available to all people.

Accessible Maine! — Very Special Arts Maine's Accessible Maine! program consists of a team of people who provide consultation to theaters, museums, libraries and other cultural venues across the state on how to become more accessible. In addition, the Accessible Maine! team assists people with disabilities in identifying accessible cultural programs and venues. This program benefits almost 600 people with and without disabilities each year.

Employment Training, There and Back FM Band — Very Special Arts Maine presents the "There and Back Again FM Band," a collection of artists with and without disabilities who are of professional caliber and require access accommodations in order to perform. "There and Back" provides opportunities for professionals to perform and to raise public awareness of the needs for accessibility both on and off the stage. Available for your next event!

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 4,500 people directly participate in Very

Special Arts Maine festivals in Brunswick and Portland. These festivals include the annual Deaf Culture Festival, in which students and artists who are deaf celebrate their culture through artistic expression.

Governor Baxter School for the Deaf Artist Residency — Very Special Arts Maine places artists in residence to work with 75 students at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in Portland. Artists work with students in the classroom, and help them craft a performance which is shown at the school and tours to other area schools.

"Matter of Perception" - First Annual Exhibition by Artists with Disabilities — Very Special Arts Maine organizes "Matter of Perception," an exhibit based upon a statewide call for art. The exhibit also features related training programs and speakers, including John D. Kemp, President and CEO of Very Special Arts. Special speakers present on topics of interest to artists, educators, and the general public. The exhibit will be at the Portland Museum of Art, and the Governor's Statehouse Gallery.

Literacy through the Arts — Very Special Arts Maine sponsors an annual "Literacy through the Arts" program, featuring festival activities that promote reading and writing. Activities include book-making, journal design, art card creation and post card making. These activities serve over 1,100 students and adults with disabilities.

New Year's Portland — Very Special Arts Maine coordinates art activities for New Year's Portland, an all day, alcohol-free and family-friendly New Year's celebration in downtown Portland. In additional to hands-on art activities, at which volunteers and artists with and without disabilities teach and lead activities, the organization provides certified ASL interpreters to give on-stage interpretation at scheduled performances and other events.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MARYLAND

Dr. Nancy S. Carsey
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Maryland
6802 McClean Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21234
Office: (410) 426-0022
Fax: (410) 426-0612
e-mail: vsamd@ix.netcom.com

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Maryland annually places artists in public and private schools to provide activities in storytelling, drama, music and dance for students with and without disabilities. This project is a partnership with the Maryland State Arts Council, and places artists in schools throughout the state.

Doin' the Rock Hall — In partnership with the Maryland Board of Education and area businesses, Very Special Arts Maryland sponsors a two- week series of workshops for 200 children with and without disabilities in Rock Hall, Maryland. Each day, different artists present arts activities in a variety of media. These workshops expose students to a variety of artists and techniques.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 3,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Maryland festivals in the following locations: Baltimore County, Montgomery County and Southern Maryland.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA Maryland distributes materials for this program to students with disabilities throughout the state and encourages them to submit plays to Very Special Arts for national consideration.

Southern Maryland Wildlife Festival — For the fifth year, Very Special Arts Maryland participates in the Southern Maryland Wildlife Festival in Indian Head. VSA Maryland artists exhibit and sell their work along with works by renowned wildlife artists from across the country.

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Special Art In the Park — For the third year, Very Special Arts Maryland provides opportunities for artists with and without disabilities to perform at the Special Art in the Park in Chestertown. The celebration features visual arts demonstrations and performances by artists with disabilities and raises public awareness of disability issues.

Special Child Workshops — In partnership with the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Very Special Arts Maryland conducts a summer multi-media workshop for 20 students with disabilities. The workshop takes place at the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Maryland offers the VA/Very Special Arts program at the Perry Point Hospital. A culminating event is held for residents and staff.

Visual Arts Exhibitions — Each year, over 700 artists with and without disabilities of all ages display their art at exhibitions sponsored by Very Special Arts Maryland. These exhibitions are held at sites throughout the state, including an exhibit at the Maryland Department of Education, State House in Annapolis, Children's Guild, Trinity School, Southern Maryland and various other locations, including restaurants, museums and businesses.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Maryland conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Maryland at the national level. The state finalist is invited to perform at various events statewide and receives a scholarship award from VSA Maryland.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MASSACHUSETTS

Ms. Maida S. Abrams
President
Very Special Arts Massachusetts
China Trade Center
2 Boylston Street, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02116
Office: (617) 350-7713
Fax: (617) 482-4298
TTY: (617) 350-6836
e-mail: vsamass@aol.com
web site: http://www.vsamass.org

Access Expressed! Directory — Very Special Arts Massachusetts publishes Access Expressed! Massachusetts, a cultural resource directory. The document is available in hard copy and on Very Special Arts Massachusetts' World Wide Web site. Through an affiliation with the Massachusetts Office on Disability, VSA Massachusetts works with graduate students in the Boston School of Occupational Therapy at Tufts University to conduct surveys for new entries and updates to the directory.

Access Expressed! Newsletter — Very Special Arts Massachusetts publishes the Access Expressed! newsletter three times each year. Designed to help develop integrated audiences for community cultural organizations in the metropolitan area, Access Expressed! features a calendar of accessible cultural events in Massachusetts, as well as book reviews, stories about VSA Massachusetts programs, and profiles of artists with disabilities. Printed copies are distributed free of charge to over 10,000 individuals, cultural organizations, businesses, foundations and disability service organizations. The newsletter is also available on audio cassette, on the World Wide Web, computer disk, an electronic bulletin board operated by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and the Talking Information Center Radio Station. Access Expressed! has over 40 organizations participating as cultural sponsors.

ADA Mini-Grants — Very Special Arts Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council provide matching grants to promote cultural access in Massachusetts and to encourage the employment of people with disabilities in the creative work of cultural organizations.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Massachusetts sponsors 12-24 residencies, placing artists to work with teachers and students in the classroom. Together the artists and teachers engage over 2,600 students with and without disabilities through the arts.

Cultural Access Initiative — Very Special Arts Massachusetts offers training to cultural organization staff in disability awareness and various aspects of developing cultural access. The organization also provides technical assistance in program development, audience development and planning for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This year, VSA Massachusetts completes a special component of the program developed in cooperation with the New England Conservatory to offer a statewide training for access teams at cultural institutions and to develop standards for providing access to persons with multiple chemical sensitivity.

Cultural Access Training — In partnership with cultural institutions and the Massachusetts Office on Disability, Very Special Arts Massachusetts provides training for other Very Special Arts state affiliates interested in replicating the Cultural Access Initiative.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,300 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Massachusetts festivals in Boston and Worcester.

International Wheelchair Dance Festival — Very Special Arts Massachusetts and Dance Umbrella are co-hosting the world's first International Festival of Wheelchair Dance in Boston, June, 1997. The Festival includes four public performances by eight wheelchair dance companies whose members include artists with and without disabilities, as well as a full program of education outreach activities, including a major conference on arts and disability issues, workshops, lecture demonstrations and seminars.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards Mentoring Grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. This year, VSA Massachusetts is providing training and guidance to VSA Washington in the area of program development. VSA Washington will draw on VSA Massachusetts' experience in expanding teacher training workshops, creating accessibility resource materials, developing a community access monitor program, and improving the marketing of accessibility programs.

Multi-Arts Resource Guide Project — The Multi-Arts Resource Guide and companion videos demonstrate how educators can integrate the arts into special and regular class curriculum. With the support of the U.S. Department of Education, Very Special Arts Massachusetts provides training for approximately 600 teachers and aides. This year, VSA Massachusetts is conducting extensive training programs in Boston, Worcester and Chelsea, as well as in California, Mississippi and New Hampshire.

Visual Arts Exhibits — Very Special Arts Massachusetts sponsors ongoing exhibits of artwork by emerging artists with disabilities in their office art gallery and by special arrangement with Harvard Community Health Plan. The organization also sponsors a major exhibit at the Fuller Museum of Art in Brockton. These exhibits involve over 100 people with disabilities and expose more than 700 people to their artwork.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program — Very Special Arts Massachusetts operates a Vocational Rehabilitation Program through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. This program focuses on the development of the employment potential of individuals with disabilities in the arts and humanities. Participants in the program receive one-on-one counseling and support with resume, portfolio and skill development. Access to computers, fax machines and other office equipment, editorial support are provided, along with the encouragement and advice of fellow artists.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MICHIGAN

Ms. Lora Frankel
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Michigan
821 W. Eleven Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067-2447
Office: (810) 546-9298
Fax: (810) 542-1646

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Michigan's district committees select 50 artists in many disciplines to work directly with nearly 2,000 children and adults with and without disabilities in classrooms, schools, arts centers, recreation facilities and social service agencies throughout the state.

Arts Access Assistance — Very Special Arts Michigan coordinates and maintains a registry of artists with disabilities living in Michigan and makes referrals for members of the arts and disability communities. In addition, the organization provides technical services and information regarding cultural access and compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Convention Connection — For the fifth year, Very Special Arts Michigan collaborates with the Michigan Council for Exceptional Children Convention to train teachers, parents, artists and other interested persons how to provide quality arts experiences for children and adults with disabilities. The Convention Connection includes one full-day pre-convention workshop, and 25 individual hour-long workshops which demonstrate the benefits of participating in the arts provides for people with disabilities.

District Art Exhibitions — Very Special Arts Michigan presents an annual exhibition featuring artwork created by students and adults with disabilities who participate in Very Special Arts Michigan programs on the district level. VSA Michigan district committees collect artwork created by 1,000 artists which then tours to galleries, festivals, schools and public places where they are seen by 10,000 people.

Expressions — Very Special Arts Michigan's Expressions newsletter increases public awareness of the value of the arts for person with disabilities. Expressions also strengthens the VSA Michigan statewide network, and informs the public of available arts programs and opportunities. Three issues are published each year.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,500 people directly participate in Very

Special Arts Michigan festivals in the following locations: Mt. Clemens, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Livonia.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards Mentoring Grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. This year, VSA Michigan is receiving training and guidance from VSA Wisconsin in the areas of board development, fundraising and strategic planning. Through this Mentoring Program, VSA Michigan is expanding its board and staff and planning comprehensive fundraising strategies.

Professional Artists Performances — Very Special Arts Michigan brings 25 professional artists to perform for over 2,500 students and adults with and without disabilities. Most performances include demonstration components and are held in both educational settings and public venues throughout the state.

Professional Development — Very Special Arts Michigan conducts ongoing professional development workshops to help teachers and art educators understand the benefits of the arts for children and adults with disabilities. These workshops demonstrate how the arts can enhance the academic curriculum, and train artists and teachers in methods for adapting arts activities for persons with disabilities.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festival — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts Michigan coordinates its sixth VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institutes in Troy and Grand Rapids. The result of a national partnership between Very Special Arts and ITT Educational Services, Inc., these festivals provide young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills.

Well into August — Very Special Arts Michigan, in association with Mental Health Associations, BoarsHead Theater: Michigan Public Theater, presents the play, "Well into August" by Amber Pollina, recipient of the 1995 Very Special Arts Young Playwrights Award. Mental health associations in Michigan provide mental health workers to assist in conducting teen discussion sessions following performances in schools and community theaters throughout the state.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Michigan conducts a call for submissions and nominates a finalist to represent VSA Michigan at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MINNESOTA

Mr. Craig Dunn
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Minnesota
Hennepin Center for the Arts
528 Hennepin Avenue, #305
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Office/Fax/TTY: (612) 332-3888
e-mail: vsamn123@mn.uswest.net

Access to Theater Project — Very Special Arts Minnesota's Access to Theater Project provides training and funding to Minnesota theaters to broaden their outreach to audience members with disabilities. The Access to Theater Project provides financial incentives to theaters to partially offset the cost of employing audio describers and American Sign Language interpreters for productions. VSA Minnesota also provides partial ticket subsidies for individuals with disabilities to attend theater performances that will be either described or interpreted, as well as assistance to theaters in establishing innovative and effective methods to incorporate accommodations into their overall theater production process.

Art Access Training — Very Special Arts Minnesota, in association with the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Minnesota Center for Arts Education, Arts Midwest and the National Endowment for the Arts, conducts training for 150 art and music teachers, theater groups and other arts organizations on adaptive art techniques for students with disabilities. In addition, VSA Minnesota conducts accessibility surveys of performing and exhibiting arts venues throughout Minnesota and assists the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Minnesota Center of Arts Education and regional arts councils around the state in assessing their programmatic and physical accessibility needs.

Artist Recognition Grant Program — For the second year, Very Special Arts Minnesota sponsors a granting program to artists with disabilities throughout the state. This program recognizes individuals who have been active in their craft for a number of years and have not have been recognized through other exhibits, awards or presentations. VSA Minnesota's Artist Recognition Grants are intended for adults who are currently not enrolled in university courses.

Arts Access Awards — Very Special Arts Minnesota presents the second annual Arts Access Awards. Nominations are solicited from around the state to identify organizations and venues that have made accessibility and disability awareness a priority in their performances, exhibits, employment and physical sites. The Arts Access Award, The Jaehny, is produced by Minnesota artist with a disability and named for long-time arts advocate and theater professional, Jaehne Clare.

Dancing Wheels Residency — Very Special Arts Minnesota co-sponsors a two-day residency featuring the Cleveland Ballet Dancing Wheels troupe. The Dancing Wheels residency is conducted at the Minnesota Arts High School with students from their dance program as well as 50 students with disabilities from other school districts. The first day features a workshop with the Dancing Wheels troupe and the second involves an interactive dance experience between the two groups of students.

Emerging Artist Grant Program — For the fourth year, Very Special Arts Minnesota offers a granting program to artists with disabilities throughout the state. Last year, the committee distributed 9 awards to emerging artists, each in the amount of $150. This program seeks to recognize individuals with disabilities over the age of 14 who are active in their craft, yet have not achieved professional status.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 200 adults with disabilities directly participate in Very Special Arts Minnesota's annual festival in Minneapolis, and 600 students participate in another festival in Thief River Falls.

Lutheran Brotherhood Exhibit — Very Special Arts Minnesota sponsors a visual arts exhibit featuring artists who submitted entries for the 1996 Artist Recognition Grants program. The exhibition is placed on display at the Lutheran Brotherhood Gallery in downtown Minneapolis for the entire month of October. The exhibition includes two- and three-dimensional works by 10-15 artists with disabilities.

Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children Conference Exhibit — Very Special Arts Minnesota coordinates an exhibit of artwork by 50 children with disabilities which is displayed at the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children Conference in St. Paul. In addition, VSA Minnesota offers presentations at the conference on using the arts in special education classrooms and implementing the Start with the Arts program.

Native American Festival — The Very Special Arts Native American Initiative provides opportunities for Native American children with disabilities to learn through exploring contemporary and traditional art forms. A collaborative effort between Very Special Arts and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the initiative promotes arts programming in BIA schools and culminates in a Native American Festival The 6th annual National Native American Very Special Arts Festival is hosted by Very Special Arts Minnesota. The festival will feature a full day hands-on arts festival culminating with a feast and pow wow at the Minneapolis Convention Center; scheduled visits to the Minnesota History Center Museum and Science Museum of Minnesota; performances at a St. Paul public school; opening ceremonies at the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul; and a visual art exhibition.

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Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Minnesota's Start with the Arts program is implemented in 14 early childhood classrooms around the state.

"The Boy Who Walked Backwards" — Very Special Arts Minnesota is working in close collaboration with Childs Play Theater to produce the one act play, "The Boy Who Walked Backwards," by Jesse Hove of Apple Valley, Minnesota. The play received the 1996 Very Special Arts Young Playwrights Award. VSA Minnesota and Childs' Play Theater are developing a school curriculum to accompany the production, as well as a series of facilitated discussion groups for high school students. This production will begin in January, 1998.

Using the Arts in Special Education Settings — Very Special Arts Minnesota, in conjunction with four other Twin Cities arts organizations, assists teachers, volunteers and administrators in developing a comprehensive arts program for students with disabilities at the Jefferson School in Minneapolis. In addition, VSA Minnesota provides regular in-service training to teachers, special educators, arts specialists and regular educators throughout the state of Minnesota. By extension, these workshops reach over 500 children with and without disabilities.

Visual Arts Workshop and Exhibit — Very Special Arts Minnesota creates opportunities for 30 people with mental illness to participate in visual arts activities that are led by instructors who also have mental illness. The instructors are members of a select leadership group developed by Pat Young of the Mental Health Association of Minnesota called the 26th Street Artists. The project involves a series of arts workshops designed and led by the 26th Street Artists group and held at three Minneapolis drop-in centers for people with mental illness. The artwork produced at the workshop is later exhibited at the drop-in center as well as other sites in the local community.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MISSISSIPPI

Dr. Jorja Turnipseed
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Mississippi
P.O. Box 9709
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9709
Office: (601) 325-2367
Fax: (601) 325-0666
e-mail: vsams@ra.msstate.edu

Artcard Program — Very Special Arts Mississippi, in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce, developed postcards depicting local historical buildings painted by an adult artist with a disability. Because of the success of this program, Very Special Arts Mississippi is expanding the Artcard Project to include prints of Mississippi State University's oldest and most revered buildings. The Artcards are marketed throughout the University's Alumni Association and University Relations offices and are included in the VSA Mississippi Marketing Cooperative.

Disability Awareness — Staff, board members and volunteers of Very Special Arts Mississippi travel regularly throughout the state to make presentations art programs for people with disabilities and specific disability issues. The organization also works with the Mississippi Arts Commission to host training sessions focusing on disability and arts-related issues.

Emerging Artists Program — Very Special Arts Mississippi provides assistance to adult artists with disabilities in the state in exhibiting and marketing their work. Each year, the organization sends out a statewide call for art to identify emerging artists, and selects 5-8 artists who have artistic potential. VSA Mississippi assists these emerging artists in preparing professional portfolios, making slides of their work, pricing their work, preparing news releases, and other professional development strategies. The Pennebaker Gallery and The Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation Center Gallery in Jackson assist VSA Mississippi in working with these artists and exhibiting their works.

Exhibits Program — Very Special Arts Mississippi coordinates an exhibit of artwork by over 50 children and adults with and without disabilities which tours to libraries, banks, museums, galleries, and other venues throughout the state. The exhibit raises public awareness of the talents and creative abilities of people with disabilities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 21,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Mississippi festivals in the following locations: Biloxi, Brandon, Cleveland, Greenville, Grenada, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Laurel, Madison, McComb, Meridian, Pascagoula, Senatobia, Starkville, Tishomingo, and Verona. In addition, Very Special Arts Mississippi conducts its 7th annual statewide festival. Held at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in the state's capital of Jackson, over 4,000 people with disabilities participate in this festival.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. Very Special Arts Mississippi conducts the Legacy Project at elderly day care centers and nursing homes in Starkville area, involving 200 senior citizens. The program is coordinated in cooperation with the Area Agency on Aging, and the Department of Social Work at Mississippi State University.

Marketing Cooperative — Very Special Arts Mississippi serves as an agent for several artists and craftspeople with disabilities. Their works are sold at Very Special Arts Mississippi booths at craft fairs, with proceeds going to both the artists and the organization.

Santa Project — For the fifth year, Very Special Arts Mississippi sponsors an artist to assist students in special education classrooms in the creation of Christmas ornaments. This year, the Santa Project is extended to include students at state reform school. Each ornament is engraved with the initials of its creator and is identified with a tag containing information about the artist and VSA Mississippi. The items are sold at holiday craft fairs and other select markets regionally.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Mississippi trains teachers in the implementation of Start with the Arts and sponsors the program in early childhood classrooms throughout the state.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Mississippi provides weekly art classes for veteran outpatients at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Jackson. VSA Mississippi received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program to conduct this program.

VSArtswear — Over the past several years, Very Special Arts Mississippi has created a line of merchandise featuring participants' artwork on t-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags and posters. A Very Special Artswear tag, which is attached to each item, describes the artist and contains information about VSA Mississippi.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MISSOURI

Ms. Christina Nagel
President, Board of Directors
Very Special Arts Missouri
809 N. Spring Street
Independence, MO 64050
Office: (816) 796-4800

Artists Unlimited — The Artists Unlimited Project is a national program that makes visual artwork created by Very Special Arts participants available to area hospitals and nursing homes. For the seventh year, VSA Missouri conducts the Artist Unlimited Project in cooperation with Services for Independent Living in Columbia. VSA Missouri sponsors two 8-week sessions in the visual and language arts for 20 participants with disabilities. The sessions take place in an accessible facility, after which pieces are distributed to rehabilitation centers, hospitals and housing facilities. Qualified facilitators from Services for Independent Living conduct the project with the support of VSA Missouri district coordinators.

Creative Writing Project — Very Special Arts Missouri conducts a Creative Writing Project in cooperation with Services for Independent Living in Columbia. Approximately 50 individuals with and without disabilities participate in workshops focusing on writing prose, poetry, and short stories. A qualified instructor leads the two-hour workshops for sixteen weeks. Written pieces are eligible for public reading at the VSA Missouri festival in Saint Louis.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 1,800 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Missouri festivals in the following locations: Earth City, Independence, Kansas City, Leawood, and St. Louis.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Missouri and the Missouri School for the Arts sponsor a dance class and workshop for 20 children with disabilities at the Missouri School for the Blind.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA Missouri distributes program application materials to students with disabilities throughout the state, distributes guides to teachers, and conducts play writing workshops in several high schools.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Missouri conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Missouri at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS MONTANA

Ms. Alayne Dolson
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Montana
221 E. Front Street
Missoula, MT 59802
Office: (406) 549-2984
e-mail: alaynusa@montana.com

Art Class — Since 1994, Very Special Art Montana has offered art classes for head injury survivors. Twelve adults are involved in a variety of art projects including painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking. Participants exhibit their work at local, state and regional art shows.

Art Exhibitions — Very Special Arts Montana, in partnership with Opportunity Resources, the Montana Governors' Office and the Montana Developmental Disabilities Council, creates opportunities for artists with disabilities to publicly show their work in four art exhibitions yearly. In addition, Very Special Arts Montana participates in Very Special Arts Washington's "Beyond Boundaries" Exhibit.

Art Workshops — Very Special Arts Montana offers workshops in the visual arts to 25 adults with disabilities at the Custer County Art Center in Miles City. In addition, the organization offers workshops for adults with developmental disabilities and at-risk youth at Paris Gibson Square Museum in Great Falls and at Beall Park Center in Bozeman.

Convalescent Center Workshop — Very Special Arts Montana, the Southwest Montana Arts Council and Young Audiences of Western Montana co-sponsor a creative writing program for individuals at the Convalescent Center in Dillorn. Center staff are trained to assist participants in continuing writing activities after completion of the program.

Creative Writing Project (1997 State Program Grant Recipient - 2nd Year) — Very Special Arts Montana sponsors creative writing workshops for teenagers who reside in Missoula's Talbot Centers, residential treatment centers for at-risk youth. The program allows students to explore their creativity through writing and encourages sharing of their own works, as well as readings by regional writers of renown. This year, Very Special Arts Montana has expanded the project to include students from Hygalite Youth Homes in Beall Park. The students collaborate with a group of adults with developmental disabilities who are in a photography workshop, creating stories and poems to accompany the adults' photographs. An anthology of the students' creative writing will be produced as a result of this project. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Disability Awareness Month — In celebration of Disability Awareness Month, Very Special Arts Montana partners with Missoula's IDEA PTA to provide art opportunities to youth with emotional disabilities. The youth are invited to create individual banners expressing their views on disability which are displayed in the Governor's Art Show in Helena, and in the Missoula Mall during the Missoula County Public Schools Art Show.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 150 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Montana festivals in Gold Creek and Missoula and at Camp Clearwater in Seeley Lake.

Hamilton Opportunity Resources — Very Special Arts Montana offers a six week series of art workshops to Hamilton Opportunity Resources residents, and training to Hamilton staff to assist them in developing a creative arts program for residents interested in developing their artistic skills.

Living Art — Very Special Arts Montana's Living Art program is a 10-week series of workshops in the arts for 10 adults with disabilities and individuals with cancer. Led by artists with disabilities, the Living Arts workshops focus on the healing aspects of the arts and involve movement, mask-making, and writing activities.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for including students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Montana offers New Visions Dance classes to individuals with disabilities and training in adaptive dance techniques to University of Montana dance and physical therapy students.

Royal Manor Extended Care Facility Program — Very Special Arts Montana trains staff at the Royal Manor Extended Care Facility to develop creative arts programs for residents that increase their opportunities for creative expression. Training workshops are offered once a month for five months.

Sign Interpretation — Very Special Arts Montana provides sign interpretation for the Missoula Children's Theatre production of "Rumplestilskin." This service helps the theater expand their audience to include children and adults with hearing impairments.

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Women's Resource Center Workshop — Very Special Arts Montana, in partnership with the Southwest Montana Arts Council, conducts creative writing workshops for Women's Resource Center participants and offers training to Center staff in using creative writing as part of their regular services.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEBRASKA

Mr. Nigel Buss
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Nebraska
P.O. Box 163
Norfolk, NE 68702-0163
Office: (402) 371-6451
Fax: (402) 887-4604
e-mail: nbuss@pluggers.esu8.k12.ne.us

Access Midwest '97 Conference/Exposition — Very Special Arts Nebraska takes part in the Access Midwest '97 Conference/Exposition, providing artist's workshops, demonstrations and performances for over 3,000 people with disabilities. VSA Nebraska also provides accessibility training sessions and disability awareness sessions to all Expo participants.

Arts for All — Very Special Arts Nebraska, Elkhorn Public Schools, Educational Service Unit #3, and the Omaha Resource Center for Assistive Technology, collaborate to train schools and organizations in the use of specialized adaptive arts equipment for individuals with disabilities. Over 550 adults and children with disabilities create works of art using this equipment.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 1,700 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Nebraska festivals in the following locations: Kearney, Norfolk and Omaha.

International Day — Very Special Arts Nebraska hosts its annual VSA International Day in April at schools throughout Nebraska to celebrate Very Special Arts programs around the world. Over 1,000 students with and without disabilities across Nebraska create murals depicting the event's purpose of increasing cultural awareness and respect for diversity.

Multi-State Photodocumentary Project — Very Special Arts Nebraska and Kent Klima, an Omaha photographer who has a disability, are coordinating a multi-state photodocumentary project to emphasize the commonalties of all people with disabilities and to highlight artists with disabilities. The project also aims to increase awareness and public understanding of the special challenges faced by Native American artists working on reservations.

My Home Town Nebraska Project — For the fourth year, Very Special Arts Nebraska sponsors the "My Home Town Nebraska" show, inviting individuals of all ages and abilities to create works of art commemorating and celebrating their home towns. Fifteen final entries are selected to go on tour and join the artwork from previous years' shows on permanent display at the State Capitol in Lincoln. The project, which involves over 500 artists, builds community pride and raises public awareness of the importance of art programs for all people.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Nebraska conducts the Start with the Arts program in 10 early childhood classrooms and trains pre-school teachers to develop interactive learning experiences for children through the arts. In 1997, VSA Nebraska also received a Start with the Arts grant to conduct a regional training institute for teachers, administrators, parents, and artists from throughout the midwest.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Nebraska conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Nebraska at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEVADA

Ms. Mary Ellen Horan
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Nevada
4598 South Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89502-6013
Office: (702) 826-6100
Fax: (702) 826-6107
e-mail: vsanv@ix.netcom.com

Art License Plates — During the 1995 legislative session, a bill was signed into law allowing Nevada State Council on the Arts and Very Special Arts Nevada to create a license plate to benefit arts education in Nevada. Artwork was selected from 500 VSA Nevada participants with and without disabilities to be used in the plate design. Plates are sold with a percentage of sales directed to support artist residency programs and other arts activities for children throughout the state.

Arts in Convalescent Centers — Very Special Arts Nevada artists conduct visual and performing art workshops at six convalescent centers in Reno, Sparks, and Carson City. The VSA Nevada Arts in Convalescent Centers program is often the only creative opportunity for the 200 adults with disabilities who participate in the workshops.

Arts on the Green — Very Special Arts Nevada presents the sixth annual Arts on the Green show and sale in which 60 fine artists exhibit and sell their art work. Ten percent of the artists' sales is donated back to VSA Nevada. In addition, VSA Nevada provides hands-on art workshops for over 300 children with and without disabilities at the Arts on the Green event in Reno.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Nevada places artists in self-contained, mainstreamed and special education classrooms to teach visual and performing arts at schools throughout the state. These residencies serve 500 children and youth with and without disabilities.

Camp Lotsafun — Very Special Arts Nevada hires a performance artist each summer to work with campers at Camp Lotsafun on the shores of Lake Tahoe. Individuals with disabilities attend this camp to enjoy outdoor recreation events and arts and crafts.

China Springs Youth Detention Center — The China Springs Youth Detention Center is a new site for VSA Nevada programming, providing creative outlets to youth who are incarcerated. In collaboration with the Nevada State Arts Council, Very Special Arts Nevada sponsors an artist residency for the youth at China Springs.

Discover the Arts — As part of the Uptown, Downtown, ARTown festivities in Reno each July, Very Special Arts Nevada places artists to conduct hands-on art workshops for children with and without disabilities in Wingfield Park on the Truckee River.

Exhibitions — Artwork from several Very Special Arts Nevada programs is exhibited at festivals, Reno City Hall, Lake Mansion and other venues throughout the year for an audience of over 3,000 viewers. Artwork created by Very Special Arts Nevada participants is on permanent display at the William J. Raggio Plaza in Reno and another facility in Carson City. Both units are operated by Accessible Space, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides accessible, affordable housing and support services for adults with mobility impairments and/or brain injuries.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with and without disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 8,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Nevada festivals in the following locations: Austin, Battle Mountain, Ely, Las Vegas, Lovelock and Reno. These festivals reach an audience of over 5,000 people. In addition, VSA Nevada artists conduct hands-on art workshops for thousands of fairgoers at the five-day Nevada State Fair in August.

Holiday Card Programs — Over 400 students in special education classes create original holiday art to be printed on greeting cards. FHP Health Care prints 20,000 holiday cards, which help spread the word about Very Special Arts Nevada's programs and mission. An exhibit of the original artwork is conducted in several venues.

Lake Mansion Renovation — Very Special Arts Nevada moved to the historic Lake Mansion in Reno in January, 1996. The mansion was the home of the founder of Reno, Myron Lake. Built in 1877, the main floor of the Mansion remains a museum that is open to the public. VSA Nevada is assisting with the renovation process, including making the Lake Mansion more accessible, and has begun scheduling arts activities at the mansion.

Macy's Benefit Shopping Day — Very Special Arts Nevada hires and coordinates visual artists to conduct workshops for children at Macy's annual benefit shopping day in Reno.

McMillan Art Scholarship Program — In honor of Very Special Arts Nevada's founding board member, Rosemary McMillan, VSA Nevada provides funding for adults and children with disabilities to attend workshops at the Nevada Museum of Art and the Namaste Art School in Reno.

Murals Program — Marine artist, John Coleman, works with 20 students with disabilities in Reno schools to create murals of dolphins, porpoises, seahorses and other scenes of ocean life. He works in self-contained classrooms, and has completed 10 murals to date with over 550 students with disabilities. In addition, VSA Nevada artist Phil Coleman works with at-risk students at several middle and high schools, designing and creating murals developed by the students to tie into their language arts and social studies curriculum.

Nevada Association for the Handicapped — A Very Special Arts Nevada artist conducts hands-on visual arts workshops at an after-school programs in Las Vegas for children with disabilities.

Nevada Community Enrichment Program — Very Special Arts Nevada works with the Nevada Community Enrichment Program to provide rehabilitation training for individuals who have experienced a stroke or head injury. On a weekly basis, VSA Nevada provides visual or performing art workshops for 40 adults with disabilities.

Program for Juveniles in Detention Facilities (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — Very Special Arts Nevada provides art workshops for youth at the Elko County Juvenile Detention Center. Visual and literary artists are trained to lead the workshops, which assist the youth in developing both social and artistic skills. Fifty workshops are held over a seven month period. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Reno Housing Authority — As part of a drug elimination program, Very Special Arts Nevada organizes art activities for 200 children with and without disabilities residing at the Reno Housing Authority's family facilities. A collaboration between Very Special Arts Nevada and the Reno Housing Authority, the program has expanded from serving one housing facility to serving all five units located in Stead, Reno, and Raleigh Heights on a year-round basis. Programs include visual, performing and language arts workshops, as well as four day-long "art camps" per year. This program was recognized nationally by the National Association of Local Arts Agencies and was presented as a model project to housing authority administrators throughout the nation.

Reno River Walk — Each year, Very Special Arts Nevada participates in the Reno Festival of Trees and Lights, celebrating the start of the holiday season by providing hands-on art workshops for hundreds of children on the Reno River Walk. In addition, VSA Nevada works in collaboration with the City of Reno to provide quality arts activities for special events on the Reno River Walk throughout the year.

Sierra Regional Center — Located in Sparks, the Sierra Regional Center is a residential facility for adults with disabilities. Very Special Arts Nevada provides visual and performing arts activities for 10-20 participants each week.

Soroptimists Salute to Youth — For several years, Very Special Arts Nevada has provided artwork for the Salute to Youth invitations, programs and table favors. Young artists from the Reno Housing Authority program create the artwork to be used for this event, are invited to attend the luncheon, and are honored for their talent.

Summerlin Celebration of the Arts — Very Special Arts Nevada has been designated as the beneficiary of the annual Summerlin Celebration of the Arts event which involves 400 children with and without disabilities, and reaches an audience of 5,000 annually. VSA Nevada will provide hands-on art workshops and volunteers to assist in all areas of the event.

Teacher Renewal Scholarship — The Very Special Arts Nevada Teacher Renewal Scholarship allows special education teachers and students with disabilities to take art workshops at the Namaste Art School in Reno. The scholarship was established by long-term VSA Nevada volunteer Charlotte Voitoff.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Nevada conducts workshops at Arville House, a club-house for veterans with disabilities associated with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Las Vegas. The program culminates with an exhibition, performance, festival or other special event to showcase the veteran's accomplishments. VSA Nevada received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program grant to conduct this program.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ms. Janice Hastings
Executive Director
Very Special Arts New Hampshire
44 South Main St.
Concord, NH 03301-4822
Office: (603) 228-4330
Fax: (603) 433-7452
TTY (NH Relay Service): (800) 737-2964
e-mail: vsanh@ix.netcom.com

After School Arts — Very Special Arts New Hampshire conducts after-school arts classes in Manchester and Plymouth for high school and college students to work with artists, instructors and younger children with disabilities in integrated settings. Derryfield high school students receive community service credits for mentoring elementary students with and without disabilities in two series of after-school programs. Plymouth State College art education students also receive credit for their participation in this integrated arts series.

Arts-Based Summer Job Training Program — Very Special Arts New Hampshire's Arts-Based Summer Job Training Program provides job training for at-risk adolescents, ages 14-21. Pre-employment and work maturity skills are taught through arts-based activities and creative academic classes. Specific programming varies from summer to summer, but always pairs students with professional artists in meaningful arts-based projects that give back to the community. Projects such as creating public works of arts and folk art activities for young campers provide at-risk youth the opportunity to develop employment skills and build self-esteem as they learn to become active and productive citizens in a fun and creative atmosphere.

Arts for Children in Hospitals — The Arts for Children in Hospitals program educates health care professionals about the importance of the arts as a communications tool with children. As part of this college-level course, medical students work side-by-side with their pediatric patients on art projects which build trust and encourage children to talk about their hospital experiences. The primary goal of the program is to shift the medical student's focus from the child's medical chart and pathology to sensitivity toward the whole child. Very Special Arts New Hampshire's Arts for Children in Hospitals Program, now it its seventh year, provides training and services annually to 8 medical students, and direct services to 40 children and 25 adults with and without disabilities.

Arts for Patients in Hospitals — Arts for Patients in Hospitals is Very Special Arts New Hampshire's adaptation of the Arts for Children in Hospitals Program. This new program educates second-year medical students about the importance of the arts as a communications tool. Medical students work side-by-side with their patients on art projects at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. As with the

Arts for Children in Hospitals Program, the primary goal is to encourage medical students to communicate with patients in a way that is sensitive to the whole person and not simply the disease or condition that brings them into a hospital.

Arts for Veterans in Hospitals — Arts for Veterans in Hospitals is another Very Special Arts New Hampshire adaptation of the Arts for Children in Hospitals Program. Now in its fourth year, this program educates second-year medical students about the importance of the arts as a communications tool, and also involves 25 veterans from the White River Junction Medical Center. Dartmouth medical students work side-by-side with veterans on art and music projects in the veteran's facility.

Arts Programming in New Hampshire Schools — Very Special Arts New Hampshire's Arts in alternative schools and specialized facilities provides children who are at-risk or have disabilities with positive and creative activities in the visual arts, drama, dance and music. Programming in the schools includes artist residencies, student performances, pre-vocational training in the arts, arts integrated curriculum development, teacher training, festivals, community outreach and exhibits. Collaborating organizations include, but are not limited to, Easter Seals Society, Southeastern Regional Education Service Center (SERESC), and Spaulding Youth Center.

CAN-DO Traveling Art Exhibit — Very Special Arts New Hampshire exhibits CAN DO, a traveling show of artwork created by art teachers, students, participants, and professional artists with and without disabilities. Exhibit openings often incorporate performances or hands-on workshops by participating artists. A portion of the show, entitled "Please Touch," includes tactile works of art created by and for individuals with visual impairments. The New Hampshire State Council on the Arts has included CAN DO in the new Traveling Exhibitions Catalogue made available throughout the state.

Community Arts Inclusion Program (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — In collaboration with community service groups serving adults with developmental disabilities, VSA New Hampshire provides arts programs for community members with disabilities. This program includes art classes for participants, training sessions and workshops for caregivers, a monthly arts calendar, and training for local cultural facilities to help them improve their program accessibility. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Cultural Facilities Training — Very Special Art New Hampshire's Cultural Facilities Training Program provides programmatic access training to cultural facilities across the state. Over 150 docents, security guards, receptionists, artists, teachers and staff have been trained to provide accessible services and welcome people with disabilities to cultural facilities such as the Currier Gallery of Art, the Canterbury

Shaker Village, Ballet New England, the Capitol Center for the Arts, and the Music Hall in Portsmouth.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,300 people directly participate in Very Special Arts New Hampshire festivals in the following locations: Concord, Manchester, Merrimack, Penacook, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Somersworth, and Tilton.

In-Service Training — Very Special Arts New Hampshire trains arts and music teachers throughout the state to effectively include students with disabilities in their classrooms. Training for core curriculum teachers encourages integration of the arts in all subjects as a means of prompting learning at many levels and utilizes the concept of layering arts activities for access by all students.

Music Play (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — Very Special Arts New Hampshire provides community-based weekly music programs for parents and their children to enjoy and learn songs, finger plays, singing games, simple chants and movement activities. The classes are integrated for children with and without disabilities. Music teachers and children's musicians are trained to conduct these Music Play classes and training is offered to interested daycare and preschool teachers. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. Very Special Arts New Hampshire coordinates an artist residency project at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in White River Junction, Vermont. The residency includes pottery, music, and mural painting, involving patients in the Long Term and Acute Care Units, as well as evening workshops for veterans in the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder program. VSA New Hampshire received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts grant to conduct this project.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEW JERSEY

Ms. Ilene Isaacs
Executive Director
Very Special Arts New Jersey
841 Georges Road
North Brunswick, NJ 08902
Office: (908) 745-3885
TTY: (908) 745-3913
Fax: (908) 745-4524

Art Par Excellence — Very Special Arts New Jersey's Art Par Excellence is a statewide touring exhibit of original, two-dimensional works by children with disabilities, ages 8-21. The exhibit tours to corporate locations and cultural institutions throughout the state, featuring opening day receptions for the artists, their families and school personnel.

Arts for Children with Autism — Very Special Arts New Jersey is sponsoring its twelfth year of arts workshops for children with autism and their parents. Parent/child workshops are conducted under the guidance of a dance, music or art therapist, with assistance from college students and other professionals. These educational workshops emphasize the importance of creative interaction between parent and child. The program is conducted in Middlesex, Ocean and Gloucester Counties. Collaborating partners include the Learning Resource Center of the New Jersey State Department of Education, and Dreams for Tomorrow.

Art for Every Student Conference — Collaborating with the Art Educators of New Jersey, Very Special Arts New Jersey has created a conference designed to help art teachers in their work with students with disabilities. This conference offers practical information, "hands-on" workshops, and resources to teachers in serving the needs of students with disabilities in the classroom.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Thousands of individuals directly participate in Very Special Arts New Jersey festivals in the following locations: Bergen, Edison, Gloucester, Newark, and Union Counties.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. Very Special Arts New Jersey has developed a collaborative project with two senior adult centers in Middlesex County, designed to evoke memories through the telling of oral histories, theater, and visual arts activities.

Mercer County Arts Institute — Very Special Arts New Jersey and the Mercer County Arts Institute collaborate to provide 10 weeks each of visual arts and music classes, and 8 weeks each of theater and drama classes. The program gives children with developmental disabilities, ages 4-18, opportunities to experience each of the art disciplines, learning to express themselves and refine their artistic skills.

New Brunswick Theater Program — Very Special Arts New Jersey, New Brunswick Youth Services and the City of New Brunswick collaborate to bring an after-school/camp theater arts program to elementary school children in New Brunswick. The children are exposed to all aspects of theater arts training, including attendance at professional performances, and a culminating performance of their own.

New Jersey Arts Access Task Force — The New Jersey Arts Access Task Force, initiated by Very Special Arts New Jersey in 1992, is comprised of individuals with specific knowledge and expertise in areas relating to accessible programming and facilities. The Task Force is a resource for New Jersey's arts community as they make structural and programmatic changes to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Training and technical assistance for the implementation of structural changes, the development of programs that include people with disabilities, and staff sensitivity training are some of the services the Arts Access Task Force provides. The Task Force serves as a resource for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and has been responsible for devising an accessibility questionnaire for Arts Council grantees, holding access plan workshops, evaluating plans, and helping organizations revise and implement their plans.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Each year, children with autism and their parents participate in dance, music and creative movement classes designed to increase communication and socialization skills. Each class is led by a dance or music therapist, while volunteers from Glassboro State College and Rutgers University provide one-on-one guidance to each parent-child pair. New Visions Dance Project classes are conducted in Middlesex, Gloucester and Ocean Counties.

Resource Clearinghouse — Very Special Arts New Jersey serves as a clearinghouse for inquiries related to the arts and disabilities. To date, Very Special Arts New Jersey has processed over 4,500 inquiries, including referral of arts consultants for programs serving children with disabilities, information on current arts programs for people with disabilities, information on accessibility of cultural facilities, and assisting agencies in the planning of arts programs for people with disabilities.

Storyteller Players — Very Special Arts New Jersey co-founded the Storyteller Players, a theater company for adults with developmental disabilities, in 1986. The program includes weekly workshops in various aspects of theater development and performances. Participants create original material which is rehearsed and performed at various locations.

Unlimited Potential Theater Company — Formed in 1988, the Unlimited Potential Theater Company provides opportunities in all aspects of theater for individuals with disabilities. Members of the group participate in workshops in theater improvisation, stage movement, voice, acting techniques, costuming, play writing and technical operations. Very Special Arts New Jersey sponsors the workshops and performances, and provides company members with transportation to rehearsals, which are held at accessible venues. In addition, sign language interpreters are available upon request, playbills are available in large print and Braille, and scripts are available on audio tape and in Braille. The troupe has a repertoire of three touring productions, as well as an annual residency at Plays-in-the-Park.

Very Special Arts New Jersey/Arts Achievement Awards — Very Special Arts New Jersey annually presents awards to students with disabilities who have demonstrated a commitment to the arts; to educators and administrators who have developed outstanding programs in the arts for children with disabilities; and to individuals who have distinguished themselves through their commitment to arts education for young people with disabilities. Award recipients become candidates for the New Jersey Governor's Awards in Arts Education presented at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton, which is sponsored by the Alliance for Arts Education/New Jersey and the New Jersey Department of Education.

Wordsmith's Competition/Reader's Theater — This year will mark the third annual Very Special Arts New Jersey Wordsmith's Competition. Writers are identified through colleges, agencies and writing groups to submit entries in poetry, essay and play writing. Through individual and group adjudication by professional judges in each literary form, and a public staged reading of the winning works is presented by Unlimited Potential Theater Company.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. VSA New Jersey issues a statewide call for entries each year for this program. At the Very Special Arts New Jersey Arts Achievement Awards, the organization recognizes one artist for his or her outstanding accomplishments in music. This state award recipient is then nominated to participate in the Young Soloists program on the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEW MEXICO

Ms. Beth Rudolph
Executive Director
Very Special Arts New Mexico
P.O. Box 7784
Albuquerque, NM 87194
Office: (505) 245-8545
Fax: (505) 843-8262
TTY: (505) 766-9620

Arts Accessibility Initiatives — Very Special Arts New Mexico's Arts Accessibility Initiative provides leadership, technical assistance, advocacy and resources to assist local communities statewide in developing and implementing accessible arts programming. The Arts Accessibility Initiatives also further the field of arts for individuals with disabilities through the development of model projects, research studies, innovative materials and methodologies, and provides training for administrators, educators and parents. To demonstrate accessibility and showcase creative talents, Very Special Arts festivals and special events are presented throughout the state each year at ten or more sites, serving approximately 6,000 persons.

Buen Viaje Dancers — The Buen Viaje Dancers are a dance company whose members have served as the ambassadors for Very Special Arts New Mexico since 1982. The company consists of eight primary dancers with and without disabilities, and an apprentice company. In residence at the Enabled Arts Center, the company offers performance and workshops which involve 3,500 participants with and without disabilities throughout the state. The Buen Viaje Dancers are co-sponsored by the City of Albuquerque's Therapeutic Recreation Program. In 1997, the company is hosting a residency at the Center with Seattle's Light Motion Company, and are featured performers at !Magnifico! Albuquerque Festival of the Arts.

Enabled Arts Center — Now in it's fourth year, Very Special Arts New Mexico's Enabled Arts Center offers a day program including career development, one-on-one arts instruction, group classes and apprenticeship opportunities in both the visual and performing arts. The Enabled Arts Center serves as a mentorship and training site for this school-to-work transition project conducted in collaboration with the Albuquerque Public Schools. The Center offers teacher training to 30 educators, middle and high school student mentoring, and training in the arts which assists 80 students with and without disabilities in developing job skills for placement in arts-related jobs in the community. The studio arts program at the Center specializes in providing individualized services for youth and adults with developmental and acquired disabilities.

Enabled Literacy/Literary Project — Very Special Arts New Mexico's two-pronged Enabled Literacy/Literary project provides tutoring in literacy skills at all levels, as well as creative writing workshops for 100 people with and without disabilities in the Albuquerque area. Workshop leaders include poets and authors of national and regional stature. Students and teachers' works are published in an anthology entitled "The Enabled Writer."

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 3,200 people directly participate in Very Special Arts New Mexico festivals in the following locations: Alamagordo, Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA New Mexico facilitates a call for entries and nominates finalists to participate in the Playwright Discovery Program at the national level.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts New Mexico provides periodic Start with the Arts training for New Mexico teachers and parents. Preschools in Albuquerque, Ruidoso, and Las Cruces have served as pilot sites for the program, while schools in Ruidoso and Las Cruces have institutionalized the project, and offer both teacher training and programs for over 2,500 students and parents. In 1997, VSA New Mexico received a Start with the Arts grant to hold a regional training institute for teachers, administrators, parents and artists from across the country.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA New Mexico collaborates with the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albuquerque to provide artist residencies at both the Medical Center and the Enabled Arts Center. In addition, the organization publishes and disseminates an arts bulletin for veterans, coordinates in-home arts activities and consultations, and hosts exhibition opportunities for veterans. VSA New Mexico received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program to conduct this program.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festival — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts New Mexico coordinated its VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institute in Albuquerque. The result of a national partnership between Very Special Arts and ITT Educational Services, Inc., this festival provides young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year VSA New Mexico conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA New Mexico at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEW YORK

Ms. Azura Hassan
Grants Manager, Very Special Arts
1300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Office: (800) 933-8721
Fax: (202) 737-0725
TTY: (202) 737-0645
e-mail: azurah@vsarts.org

Very Special Arts is currently in the process of identifying exciting and innovative initiatives to serve people with disabilities in the state of New York. Our goal is to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities by exploring relevant program partners and collaborating with arts, education and disability organizations.

Early Childhood Multisensory Alphabet Awareness Program (1997 Technical Assistance Grant Recipient - 2nd Year) — The Multisensory Alphabet Program serves the needs of students with and without disabilities by using a tactile/kinesthetic approach in teaching vowel recognition to develop reading skills. Four groups of first and second grade students and students in special education classes participate in nine one-hour sessions for five months with a musician, movement specialist and visual artist. The classes use the arts to teach vowel sounds. Participants learn alphabet-related songs and skits which are then performed at a VSA New York-Buffalo festival. Very Special Arts awards special Technical Assistance Grants to Very Special Arts state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Hundreds of people directly participate in Very Special Arts New York-Buffalo festivals in the following locations: Buffalo, Plattsburgh, Potsdam, Syracuse and Long Island.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. VSA New York-Buffalo received 1996 and 1997 Legacy Program grants from Very Special Arts to implement an intergenerational program at Mary Agnes Manor in Buffalo. The program pairs 30 senior citizens with 30 students with disabilities for music, creative movement and visual arts activities.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEW YORK CITY

Dr. Bebe Bernstein
Director
Very Special Arts New York City
18-05 215 Street, Suite 15N
Bayside, NY 11360
Office: (718) 225-6305
Fax: (718) 229-0337

Art of Grooming — The Art of Grooming Project is based on the concept that by approaching grooming as a creative art it will appeal to adolescents with disabilities and impact on the development of their personal, social and occupational skills. Self image is enhanced through varied areas such as: use of make-up and color, skin care, hair styling and choice of wardrobe. The good grooming concept extends beyond appearance and includes maintaining sound health, general fitness and nutrition which related directly to success on the job. Very Special Arts New York City, in conjunction with the goals of the school curriculum for this participants, helps 500 students with and without disabilities explore options for future occupations.

Disability Training — Very Special Arts New York City provides a variety of services to strengthen awareness about the disability community through training to 6,000 teachers and volunteers. In addition, VSA New York City provides consultation to various community groups on disability and accessibility issues.

Early Childhood Program — Very Special Arts New York City, in conjunction with pre-school orientation centers, provides training on parent education and the role of the arts as a learning tool for young children with disabilities. Utilizing center staff, art therapists and physical therapists, activities culminate in Very Special Arts Festivals. These festivals focus on providing more opportunities for inclusion activities at borough sites and at VSA New York City's All-City Early Childhood Day.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Each year, Very Special Arts New York City sponsors an array of festivals in all five boroughs. In this 21st anniversary year, over 20,000 students with disabilities and their teachers participate in a wide range of festival activities at sites such as: Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx, Smug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, St. John's University in Queens, Bedford Stuyvesant Park in Brooklyn, Brownsville, Coney Island, Floyd Bennet Field Airport in Brooklyn, and Teacher's College at Columbia University in Manhattan.

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Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. Very Special Arts New York City coordinates the Legacy Program for 20 seniors at the Wartburg Lutheran Home for the Aging in Brooklyn. Students from local public schools work with an artist to conduct storytelling, visual arts, music and dance activities for the seniors. VSA New York City received a 1997 Legacy Program Grant to conduct this project.

Murals Program — Very Special Arts New York City's Murals Program brings together 3,000 children to work collaboratively creating murals depicting themes of community pride and cultural life in the city. The committee has selected "Imagine the Future" as this year's theme. A calendar, including examples of murals, is offered in recognition of the program. The murals are displayed at festivals, public facilities and schools and, at the conclusion of the program, are donated to hospitals and other facilities.

Puppetry Pleasures — Very Special Arts New York City introduced the Puppetry Pleasures Program at the Community School District 4 in Manhattan, offering on-going classes in puppet making during the school year. The program has now expanded to reach over 2,000 children and adults with and without disabilities. Puppet- making workshops are also held for teachers, paraprofessionals and family members.

Seniors and the Arts — Participants in the Very Special Arts New York City Seniors and the Arts program conduct hands-on workshops and gallery talks to children with disabilities and serve on planning committees and as artist consultants. Seniors are trained in the arts training program at St. John's University. Seniors involved in this program also plan and participate in all VSA New York City festivals.

They Are Special Too — Very Special Arts New York City's They Are Special Too program is designed to reach out to 550 New York City teachers and caregivers of people with disabilities and provide them with an opportunity to demonstrate their artistic abilities and exhibit their artwork. The highlight is a recognition reception attended by the artists and the general public. In 1997, the exhibit and reception is to be held at the United Federation of Teachers Building. A "They are Special Too" directory and video is being developed by VSA New York City.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. Very Special Arts New York City coordinates a play writing and theatrical residency in collaboration with existing programming at the Manhattan Veterans Affairs Medical Center. At the Center, an occupational therapist leads program participants in a presentation of "Candide: Updated." VSA New York City received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Grant to conduct this program.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. Fred Baars
Executive Director
Very Special Arts North Carolina
Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
Office: (919) 715-1597
Fax: (919) 715-1569
TTY: (919) 715-1566
e-mail: fbaars@dpi.state.nc.us

As We See It — Originated by Very Special Arts North Carolina-Cumberland County, the As We See It program is conducted with 24 students in Greensboro and Fayetteville who explore the art of photography. With assistance from Kiwanis Club volunteers, students learn photography using 35 mm cameras and organize an exhibition of their work.

Creative Writing Project — Very Special Arts North Carolina provides writing experiences in poetry, prose and short stories to assist individuals with disabilities in increasing communication skills and building self-awareness and self-esteem. The project is conducted in schools, hospitals and other settings in Robeson County.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Very Special Arts North Carolina enjoys a strong tradition of festivals throughout the state. Over 32,000 people directly participate in 58 Very Special Arts North Carolina festivals in the following counties: Alamance, Allegheny, Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Brunswick, Buncombe, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Davie, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Gaston, Gates, Harnett, Hoke, Iredell, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lincoln, Macon, Mecklenberg, Mitchell, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pasquotank, Pender, Pitt, Robeson, Rockingham, Rutherford, Scotland, Stanley, Union, Wake, Watauga, Wayne, Wilkes, Wilson, and the Fort Bragg Schools. In addition to these numerous local festivals, VSA North Carolina co-sponsors one annual state festival with the Special Olympics, and another in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Mayor's Very Special Arts Awards — The Mayor's Very Special Arts Awards acknowledge and celebrate individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the arts or enhanced the cultural life of the community, particularly as it relates to persons with disabilities. Very Special Arts North

Carolina conducts the Mayor's Very Special Arts Awards program in Columbus, New Hanover, Scotland, and Union Counties.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for including students with disabilities into their classes. Very Special Arts North Carolina conducts the New Visions Dance Project at the Governor Morehead School in Raleigh and Cumberland County Schools in Fayetteville.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts North Carolina implements Start with the Arts at 10 sites throughout the state. This year, VSA North Carolina received a Start with the Arts grant to hold a regional training institute in Winston-Salem for teachers, administrators, parents and artists from the southeast.

Summer Institutes — Since 1986, Very Special Arts North Carolina has co-sponsored a summer institute in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The purpose of the institute is to develop a cadre of teachers skilled in using the arts as part of the education program for children with disabilities. Participants develop plans to teach curriculum content using the arts; experiment with various arts techniques, methods and media; and explore the advantages of arts-based education. This year's institute is in Greensboro in August.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA North Carolina distributes a statewide call for entries through the state Music Education Association, the Exceptional Children Division, and the VSA North Carolina network. Durham, New Hanover and Wake Counties are sponsoring participants in this year's program.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NORTH DAKOTA

Ms. Azura Hassan
Grants Manager, Very Special Arts
1300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Office: (800) 933-8721
Fax: (202) 737-0725
TTY: (202) 737-0645
e-mail: azurah@vsarts.org

Very Special Arts is currently in the process of identifying exciting and innovative initiatives to serve people with disabilities in the state of North Dakota. Our goal is to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities by exploring relevant program partners and collaborating with arts, education and disability organizations.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS OHIO

Ms. Paula Hammer
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Ohio
Riffe Center
77 South High St., 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
Office: (614) 241-5325
Fax: (614) 241-5326
TTY (Ohio Relay Service): (614) 750-0750
e-mail: vsaoh@ix.netcom.com

Artists Directory — The Very Special Arts Ohio Artists Directory contains contact information, fee information, and descriptions of over 55 artists with and without disabilities who have expressed an interest in working with VSA Ohio programs and participants. The directory is updated yearly and is distributed free of charge to festival sites, schools, local arts agencies, and upon request.

Artists with Disabilities Network — Very Special Arts Ohio is a member of the statewide Artists with Disabilities Network (ADN). ADN was formed by the Ohio Arts Council in 1989 to address the needs of professional and emerging artists with disabilities and assist them in their careers. The ADN and VSA Ohio conduct professional development workshops, publish a newsletter and coordinate exhibits and exhibit opportunities.

Arts for Children in Hospitals — The Arts for Children in Hospitals program educates health care professionals about the importance of the arts as a communications tool with children. As part of this college-level course, medical students work side-by-side with their pediatric patients on art projects which build trust and encourage children to talk about their hospital experiences. Very Special Arts Ohio provides hands-on art experiences including music, creative movement, creative drama, and visual arts in pediatric wards through hospital to over 100 children and adults with and without disabilities. The program is conducted at Wright State University School of Medicine, Cleveland State University School of Nursing, University of Cincinnati Medical and Nursing Schools, University of Akron School of Nursing and Otterbein School of Nursing.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,200 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Ohio festivals in the following locations: Athens, Brown County, Cleveland, Findlay, Gallipolis, Highland County, Miami Valley, Scioto County, Stark County, Summit County and Toledo.

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Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Ohio's Start with the Arts program reaches over 3,000 children and adults with and without disabilities.

Statewide Art Exhibit — The Miami Valley district of Very Special Arts Ohio has sponsored a local art exhibit for ten years and, this year, opens the program statewide to 100 artists with disabilities. The exhibit opens in April prior to the Miami Valley VSA Ohio Festival and runs through the festival in May. The exhibit then travels to other VSA Ohio festival sites and various community centers, libraries, businesses and community art galleries.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS OKLAHOMA

Ms. Cindy Hoke-Blackburn
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Oklahoma
3022-B Paseo
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
Office: (405) 525-2787
Fax: (405) 525-0975

Artist Training — Very Special Arts Oklahoma Arts Team provides training to 150 artists to work with people with disabilities. Trainers give an overview of art activities in every discipline and discuss adaptive techniques. Artists attending the training sessions work in teams to share ideas and resources.

Arts Heal All (Aha!) Program — Very Special Arts Oklahoma's Aha! seminars use the arts to assist families or individuals in healing from causes of grief and loss, such as divorce, death or sexual abuse. The Aha! Seminars are designed to provide a variety of arts experiences in a non-threatening environment, that may lead each person to their own revelations and expressions, thus contributing to healing in their lives. The workshops are conducted by a team of artists identified by Very Special Arts Oklahoma and bring 650 people with and without disabilities together for a creative healing opportunity. The program culminates with an Aha! Festival, giving families opportunities to make art, dance, sing, play instruments, watch performances and experience the healing power of the arts.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,400 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Oklahoma festivals in the following locations: Broken Arrow, Lawton, Oklahoma City, Shawnee, and Tulsa. These festivals reach an additional audience of 28,000 people.

Legacy Program — The Legacy Program offers oral history exercises and arts activities to older adults at senior citizen centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other appropriate sites. Involvement in the program helps older adults reconnect with significant times in their lives, rediscover a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and build meaningful relationships with other program participants. VSA Oklahoma's "Legacy of Hope" program incorporates visual art activities and creative writing to bind two generations together. Fourth and fifth grade students with and without disabilities are brought together with residents from Southern Oaks Nursing Home to work on interviews and art exchanges focusing on the theme of hope. The program culminates in an art and creative writing show and reception at the nursing home.

MAGICAYAH — MAGICAYAH (Multi-sensory Arts Grow Inside Children and the Young at Heart) is a two-fold program featuring community workshops and a performing group. Magicayah workshops are developed for the total community -- 300 children and adults with developmental disabilities, as well as the teachers, healthcare workers, parents, siblings and families of these individuals. Workshops provide a variety of arts experiences and are appropriate for individuals of all ages. The Magicayah Performing Group is an intergenerational group including individuals with and without disabilities, at-risk youth and parents. Performers combine music, movement and costumes into wonderfully magical presentations of fantasy. Enrollment is open to adults and children with disabilities and classes are taught weekly.

Native American Initiative — The Very Special Arts Native American Initiative provides opportunities for Native American children with disabilities to learn through exploring contemporary and traditional art forms. A collaborative effort between VSA and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the initiative promotes arts programming in BIA schools and culminates in a National Native American VSA Festival. Very Special Arts Oklahoma holds four regional Native American Very Special Arts Festivals, in which over 5,000 people with disabilities participate. VSA Oklahoma also collaborates on existing prevention programs for Native American youth, using the arts to combat such problems as teen pregnancy, drug/alcohol addiction and suicide.

Peace Seekers: Alternatives to Violence Through the Arts — The Very Special Arts Oklahoma Peace Seekers program is designed to fit into existing programs in schools, community organizations, and institutions, and is particularly effective when incorporated into prevention programs. The goals of Peace Seekers, which reaches over 400 people with disabilities, is to teach tolerance, positive conflict resolution, increase self esteem, and give people healthy alternatives to violence or destruction through the arts.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. Very Special Arts Oklahoma implements this program in two settings, offering play writing workshops at the Oklahoma School for the Deaf and the Fine Arts High School. As a culminating event, the schools perform their top two plays at local festivals. Very Special Arts Oklahoma organizes a jury to attend these performances and submits the finalists' scripts to Very Special Arts for consideration at the national level.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. Very Special Arts Oklahoma's program provides 144 hours of arts instruction, combined with rehabilitation therapy, to 75 adults with disabilities at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Veterans in the creative writing classes are publishing a book of their poetry and writing, and classes in music and creative drama are being added to the curriculum this year. VSA Oklahoma received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program to conduct this program.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Very Special Arts Oklahoma distributes information regarding this program to every school in the state. The nominees are reviewed by a panel of jurors. A finalist is awarded a scholarship to continue his or her music studies and participates in the Young Soloists Program at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS OREGON

Ms. Linda Hammond
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Oregon
P.O. Box 304
Salem, OR 97308-0304
Office: (503) 378-3598 ext. 630
Fax: (503) 373-7968
TTY: (503) 378-2892

Adults Living with Mental Illness Traveling Exhibit (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — The Adults Living with Mental Illness Exhibit is a collaboration between the Arts Council of Southern Oregon, Options for Southern Oregon, Inc., and Rogue Community College. A mini-exhibit of six works by artists with mental illness travels to area schools and libraries and "gallery talks" about mental health issues are presented to students. A full exhibit by over 35 artists with mental illness is then presented in three cities. VSA awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaborations with other community organizations.

Alzheimer's and the Arts Project — Very Special Arts Oregon, in collaboration with Legacy Health System's Alzheimer's Adult Day Respite Program, coordinates an intergenerational bookmaking project for adults with Alzheimer's disease. The project includes a cooperative, intergenerational preservation of life/work memories, and brings 50 children together with older adults with Alzheimer's disease to gather life histories. Working with an oral historian, they develop their oral histories to be exhibited in the community.

Alzheimer's Festival and Training Seminar — In cooperation with Legacy Health System's Alzheimer's Adult Respite Program, Very Special Arts Oregon hosts a one-day intergenerational arts festival. The event brings language arts, music, movement and visual arts activities to Alzheimer's patients, their families and caregivers. The artists involved with the program are trained to work with Alzheimer's patients. After the festival, a one-day seminar is held, providing adaptive arts training to families and caregivers on using the arts to enhance quality of life. This program reaches over 200 people.

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Oregon works with the Central Oregon Artists in Education (AIE) program at the Central Oregon Arts Council to bring AIE artists into special education classrooms and into group homes or residential care centers in both central and southern Oregon. Many of the artists participating in these residencies have been trained by Very Special Arts Oregon to work with individuals with disabilities. Extended residencies culminate with an exhibition or group performance at a community venue. These programs reach over 200 children and adults with disabilities, with workshops in beading, mime, weaving, clay and poetry.

Artist Assemblies — Very Special Arts Oregon brings local performing artists with disabilities into schools for school-wide assemblies. They provide disability awareness training, and teach acceptance by using music, improvisation, song, dance and the performing arts. After each performance the artists go directly to classrooms for questions and answers. This highly successful program reaches more than 900 students and teachers each year.

Arts Club — Very Special Arts Oregon, in cooperation with the Umpqua Valley Arts Council's Artist in Education programs (AIE), facilitates Saturday arts classes for 100 young adults with disabilities in both Roseburg and Corvallis. Classes in Roseburg meet for six weeks on Saturdays, and include ceramics, puppet making, folk dancing, painting and drama. Weekly classes in Corvallis include a selection of offerings in music, movement and dance, photography, pottery, folk dance, theater arts and several craft activities. Club activities culminate with exhibitions at community art festivals and performances for local civic groups.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 1,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Oregon festivals in the following locations: Lagrande, Portland and Salem.

In-Service Day Training — To meet the needs of educators for ongoing training in how to best creatively teach students of varying abilities, Very Special Arts Oregon provides an annual arts in-service training at statewide teacher workshops for teachers. This year, Very Special Arts Oregon is presenting a workshop on "The Arts: A Motivator for Better Reading and Writing Skills," led by Ms. Ellen Thompson-Green, VSA Oregon board member, educator, and authority on the language arts.

Information and Resource Services — Very Special Arts Oregon offers assistance to other educational and arts organizations in the areas of program development, disability awareness, and accessibility training. In addition, VSA Oregon maintains a resource library of information on arts programming for individuals with disabilities.

Mini-Grants — Each year, Very Special Arts Oregon awards mini grants of $500 to six organizations from around the state to use as seed money to conduct VSA programming. Approximately 2,000 youth with disabilities, 50 artists and 35 teachers benefit from VSA Oregon's Mini-Grant Program each year.

Push Pin Art Show — Very Special Arts Oregon participates in the annual July Salem Art Fair in order to increase community awareness of the importance of the arts for individuals with disabilities. The Salem Art Fair is a three day community arts event which attracts well over half a million people.

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and VSA, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA Oregon implements arts programming in the Veterans Affairs Domiciliary in White City, in cooperation with the Arts Council of Southern Oregon, for 50 veterans with and without disabilities. VSA Oregon brings local actors into the facility to work with veterans on oral history, performance art and theater performance. VSA Oregon received a 1997 VA/Very Special Arts Program to conduct this program.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festival — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts Oregon coordinates its fifth VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institute in Portland. The result of a national partnership between Very Special Arts and ITT Educational Services, Inc., this festival provides young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills. Each year, this program serves 300 students with disabilities.

Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute — The Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute, named for visual artist and Very Special Arts supporter Hiro Yamagata, is a comprehensive program focusing on the creative learning process in the arts. Each year, artists with disabilities from around the world are selected as Yamagata Fellows to spend a week together exchanging ideas and sharing adaptive techniques in the visual arts. This week is followed by collaborative programming in the Fellows' home states or countries. In 1996, fabric artist Lisa Haven was selected as one of two U.S. artists to serve as a Yamagata Fellow and has continued her involvement with VSA Oregon.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS PENNSYLVANIA

Ms. Azura Hassan
Grants Manager, Very Special Arts
1300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Office: (800) 933-8721
Fax: (202) 737-0725
TTY: (202) 737-0645
email: azurah@vsarts.org

Very Special Arts is currently in the process of identifying exciting and innovative initiatives to serve people with disabilities in the state of Pennsylvania. Our goal is to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities by exploring relevant program partners and collaborating with arts, education and disability organizations.

Theater Arts Program — Very Special Arts is collaborating with Artists Incorporated, a non-profit arts education organization in Erie. Artists Incorporated is conducting an intensive and individualized theater arts education program for adults with mental retardation. In addition to learning about various aspects of theatrical production, participants will also develop important life skills through the process of developing a performance piece. This program will develop an on-going theater troupe that will perform at various venues in the community. Other sponsors and partners of this program include Mercy Hurst College, The Parent Group, and General Electric Foundation.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS RHODE ISLAND

Ms. Jeannine Chartier
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Rhode Island
500 Prospect Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Office: (401) 725-0247
Fax: (401) 725-0397
TTY (RI Relay Service): (800) 745-5555
e-mail: vsari@ix.netcom.com

Access the Arts — Very Special Arts Rhode Island coordinates artist residencies at 25 schools throughout the state. Each residency lasts 6-12 weeks, serving over 1,500 children.

Art Exhibits — Very Special Arts Rhode Island presents exhibits of artwork created by adult artists with disabilities at four different sites. The "Rusty Bucket Exhibits" are displayed at the Rhode Island Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals (MHRH). Art work created by students in Very Special Arts Classes are exhibited in the Education Gallery of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design. The fourth year of a VSA Rhode Island group show entitled "Emerging Images," will be held at the Wickford Art Association Gallery, and the third annual "Access To the Arts" exhibit is held at The AS220 Gallery.

Art for Families with HIV/AIDS — Very Special Arts Rhode Island works in collaboration with Rhode Island's leading AIDS organizations to deliver a variety of art and art therapy programs, including participatory art workshops at Camp Stepping Stone, a summer day-camp program for children with HIV/AIDS and their siblings. These activities culminate in a campers-and-counselors performance for "Friends and Family Day."

Arts Resource Directory — Very Special Arts Rhode Island maintains a roster of artists and art therapists which is made available to all schools and agencies applying for VSA Rhode Island grants and to over 150 other organizations and individuals throughout the state who design or implement art programs for people with disabilities.

Community Access and Audience Development — Very Special Arts Rhode Island provides consultation to theaters, museums, and other cultural venues regarding accessibility and actively assists in helping them develop new audiences. The Community Access and Audience Development program reaches 200 people with and without disabilities each year.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States.

Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Very Special Arts Rhode Island annually presents a mini-festival at the statewide games of the Rhode Island Special Olympics. The organization also actively participates in Rhode Island's annual Labor and Ethnic Heritage Festival at Slater Mill in Pawtucket.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Rhode Island coordinates "Chance to Dance" classes in cooperation with the Dance Alliance of Rhode Island. Over 300 children with disabilities participate in weekly dance workshops at schools throughout the state. The workshops culminate with a public performance at the Providence Performing Arts Center.

Poetry Program for Adults with Developmental Disabilities (1997 State Program Grant Recipient - 2nd Year) — Very Special Arts Rhode Island's poetry program provides opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to work with professional poets in workshop settings, to learn new communication skills, and enjoy active involvement with the arts community. At the poetry workshops, participants read, discuss and create poetry which feeds into an annual, statewide poetry contest. The winner of the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize is invited to read at the award ceremony, along with other finalists. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

RISD Museum/VSA Classes — Very Special Arts Rhode Island sponsors art classes for adults with developmental disabilities at Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art. Classes are held each Saturday, for 6 weeks, in galleries throughout the museum. Each class includes a brief art history lesson about the art work present in the current gallery, and instruction in varying art mediums. A reception and public exhibit are held at the end of each session.

School To Studio Youth Arts Conference — Very Special Arts Rhode Island provides opportunities for 150 inner-city students with and without disabilities to work with professional artists in a community setting. The students begin workshop projects with artists at their schools, and then travel to the AS220 Arts Complex to work with these artists/mentors in their studios. The students exchange information, present, display and perform their creations in the professional gallery and theater spaces of the Arts Complex at the Youth Arts Conference.

Through Deaf Eyes — Very Special Arts Rhode Island sponsors a program to enable students who attend the Rhode Island School for the Deaf to collaborate with students from The Rhode Island School of Design on visual art projects.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. Larry Salley
Executive Director
Very Special Arts South Carolina
P.O. Box 643
Columbia, SC 29202-0643
Office: (803) 931-0620
Fax: (803) 254-0320
e-mail: vsalarry@aol.com

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts South Carolina recruits and trains professional artists, musicians, writers and performers to work with over 200 children and adults with disabilities in local schools and facilities. A roster of artists is compiled, and these artists travel throughout communities in Columbia and Charleston to provide artist residencies in sculpture, music composition, poetry, puppetry and mural creations. Artists receive a disability training certification from VSA South Carolina upon completion of the program.

Disability Awareness Training — Very Special Arts South Carolina offers disability awareness training to artists and accessibility training for organizations who would like to incorporate arts education into their service provision.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts South Carolina festivals in the following locations: Aiken, Darlington and Piedmont.

Healing Icons — Very Special Arts South Carolina presents two 6-week workshops for 50 adults with disabilities. Each workshop offers technical instruction in color and pattern relationships and metal tooling, as well as emotional healing through journals, group sharing and the production of a "healing icon".

VA/Very Special Arts Program — The VA/Very Special Arts Program provides veterans who receive care at VA medical centers with quality arts experiences through artist-in-residence programs and community-based activities. A collaborative effort between the Department of Veteran Affairs and Very Special Arts, this rehabilitative program for veterans builds communication skills, independence and self esteem. VSA South Carolina organizes exhibits of veterans' work to reach other veterans and develop their interest in the arts.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS SOUTH DAKOTA

Ms. Char Crisp
Executive Director
Very Special Arts South Dakota
301 S. Garfield Ave., #8
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Office/TTY: (605) 367-5630
Fax: (605) 367-5639
e-mail: prairie@ideasign.com

Employment Training Through the Arts — Very Special Arts South Dakota Employment Training Through the Arts Program improves the employment aptitudes of adults with disabilities. Through theater exercises, participants build social skills, self-awareness and self-esteem, giving them the capability to maintain positive attitudes about themselves, their work, their co-workers, and their employer. The organization conducts nine separate week-long residencies involving over 150 youth and adults with disabilities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 1,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts South Dakota festivals in Redfield and Yankton. The festivals reach an additional audience 1,300 people.

Oscar Howe Native American Summer Art Institute — Very Special Arts South Dakota presents the Oscar Howe Native American Summer Art Institute, which reaches aspiring young Native American artists with and without disabilities, who are interested in careers in the arts. The Institute develops skills in key areas such as drawing and design and stresses Native American traditional values as well as mainstream artistic styles and ideas.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS TENNESSEE

Ms. Azura Hassan
Grants Manager, Very Special Arts
1300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Office: (800) 933-8721
Fax: (202) 737-0725
TTY: (202) 737-0645
e-mail: azurah@vsarts.org

Very Special Arts is currently in the process of identifying exciting and innovative initiatives to serve people with disabilities in the state of Tennessee. Our goal is to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities by exploring relevant program partners and collaborating with arts, education and disability organizations.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS TEXAS

Ms. Allison Marks
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Texas
1200 Circle Drive, #300-B
Fort Worth, TX 76119-8112
Office: (817) 531-8100
Fax: (817) 531-0180
e-mail: vsatx@ix.netcom.com

Art Classes — Very Special Arts Texas-Forth Worth conducts art classes for children with learning disabilities and provides studio space to adult artists with disabilities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 15,300 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Texas festivals in the following locations: Austin, Beaumont, Dallas, Hurst, Longview, Plano, Waco and Wichita Falls.

Multi-Arts Resource Guide Training — The Multi-Arts Resource Guide and companion videos are materials developed by Very Special Arts Massachusetts to demonstrate how educators can integrate the arts into special and regular class curriculum. Very Special Arts Texas-Austin brings VSA Massachusetts artists and trainers to Texas to teach educators how to use these highly successful arts education materials. This year, VSA Texas will include this training as a part of the Texas Special Education Conference in Austin.

Parent Support Program — Very Special Arts Texas-Fort Worth collaborates with the Tarrant County Employment Network to provide arts activities to disadvantaged children while their parents seek employment skills. This program directly addresses welfare reform issues, by providing a creative and productive use of time for children as their parents seek economic self-sufficiency.

Summer Day Camp — Very Special Arts Texas and the City of Fort Worth Parks and Recreation Department are collaborating on a summer day camp program for children with disabilities and other underserved populations. The program activities will take place in a mini-camp environment, emphasizing outdoor education and recreation, using the arts to teach students about the environment, wildlife and conservation.

The River Program — Very Special Arts Texas-Houston conducts The River Program, a summer dance and creative movement workshop for children with disabilities.

VSA Texas-Austin Art Exhibit — A call for art is held each year in conjunction with the Very Special Arts Texas-Austin Festival, reaching 2,000 children and youth with and without disabilities. The art which is collected is displayed for a two-week period at the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. The exhibit highlights artwork created by students with disabilities and educates the public about Very Special Arts and its mission.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS UTAH

Ms. Ruth Lubbers
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Utah
P.O. Box 526244
Salt Lake City, UT 84152-6244
Office: (801) 328-0703
Fax: (801) 328-9868
e-mail: vsautah@ix.netcom.com

Art Access Gallery — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. Over 9,000 persons have visited the Very Special Arts Utah Art Access Gallery since it opened in 1991. The gallery embraces the philosophy of inclusiveness by exhibiting works of well known and emerging artists, both with and without disabilities, thus opening a path into the mainstream arts community for artists who have disabilities and other underserved populations.

Artists Unlimited Project — The Very Special Arts Utah Art Access Gallery markets artwork created by individuals with disabilities as part of its gallery program. Specially targeted exhibits curated by VSA Utah for the gallery travel to schools, hospitals, community centers and libraries throughout the state. Each year, works of art created by persons with disabilities associated with the gallery are purchased and added to the organization's permanent collection. Pieces from the collection are available for display at local agencies on a rotating basis.

Artist Residencies — Contracting with the Utah State Office of Education, Very Special Arts Utah offers a variety of residencies including visual arts, dance, mime, sculpture and music at 24 sites across the state. These residencies offer arts instruction and opportunities to children and adults with and without disabilities in special education and regular classrooms, schools and community organizations. VSA Utah also collaborates with the Utah Arts Council Arts in Education Program to train the Arts Council's artists-in-residence in adaptive arts techniques for the classroom.

Educator Incentive Awards — Each year, Very Special Arts Utah offers incentive awards to special educators statewide, who adapt the State Office of Education Fine Arts Core Curriculum to meet the needs of students receiving special education services. Nine awards are given out in this competitive program. The adaptive projects are shared with other educators and VSA Utah receives a copy of each project for the organization's resource library.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Utah festivals in the following locations: Davis School District in the Farmington City Park, Hartigsen School in the Granite School District, Jordan Valley School in the Jordan School District, and the city of Moab. These festivals reach an additional audience of 5,000 people.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards Mentoring Grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. VSA Utah is providing training and guidance to both VSA California and Washington VSA in the areas of public relations and marketing, financial management, merchandising, day-to-day gallery management, and integrating artists with disabilities into exhibits and programs.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Utah, in collaboration with Children's Dance Theatre, has developed a New Visions Dance Project at the University of Utah providing 50 children with disabilities who receive physical therapy opportunities to explore dance and creative movement in a studio setting.

PARTNERS, A Visual Artist Mentoring Program — Having successfully piloted the PARTNERS Program in 1995, Very Special Arts Utah continues to conduct this highly specialized program which identifies adult artists with disabilities who desire assistance with their artistic development. Though this program, emerging artists are given the opportunity to work one-on-one with professional artists in order to develop artistic techniques, learn the intricacies of professionalism, make vital connections in the local arts community and, in many other ways, foster their growth as artists. The culminating event is an exhibit in the Art Access Gallery which showcases both the work of the emerging artists and their mentors.

Resource Center — Very Special Arts Utah acts as a resource center and networks with other state and local agencies to provides access information to national bulletins, adaptive curriculum, bibliographies and connections to other art agencies. The VSA Utah office also contains a resource library with publications and information on arts, education and disability issues.

Teacher In-Service — Very Special Arts Utah provides training for 30 special education teachers in adaptive arts methods and activities for students with disabilities. Through hands-on training workshops, teachers gain practical ideas, activities and materials to bring back and use in their classrooms.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS VERMONT

Mr. Alex Chirelstein
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Vermont
One Main Street, Room 120
Burlington, VT 05401
Office: (802) 860-6220
Toll Free: (800) 559-2787
Fax: (802) 860-5026
e-mail: vsavt@aol.com

Access All Areas (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — Very Special Arts Vermont conducts a two-day programmatic accessibility conference to educate and assist the Vermont Arts Council's grantees and other arts groups in making their programs and facilities fully accessible for people with disabilities. The first day focuses on visual arts, the second on performing arts. The conference includes presentations by members of the disability community, adaptive technology vendors, and arts administrators. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Art from the Heart — Very Special Arts Vermont artists and volunteers provide weekly visual arts workshops for children at the Fletcher Allen Hospital in Burlington. Through painting classes, artists and volunteers facilitate the artistic expression of 80 children in hospital settings.

Arts in Action — Very Special Arts Vermont facilitates four 32-week hands-on arts programs for 75 middle schoolers with and without disabilities at King Street Youth Center, the Boys & Girls Club, Spectrum Youth and Family Services and the Sara Holbrook Community Center.

ArtsAbility (1997 State Program Grant - 2nd Year) — Very Special Arts Vermont's ArtsAbility project brings poetry and movement workshops to 100 children with disabilities and chronic illnesses and their families and friends. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Can Do Arts — Very Special Arts Vermont continues its partnership with Howard Center for Human Services to bringing 96 workshops throughout the year in theater, movement, harmonica, folk-singing and puppetry to adults with developmental disabilities in Burlington.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Very Special Arts Vermont actively participates in the following festivals: the Old North End Pride Parade and Festival, sponsored by the City of Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office: Mid-Winter Kids Festival, sponsored by Burlington Parks and Recreation Department; Kids' Day, sponsored by Burlington Parks and Recreation Department; Jazz Festival, sponsored by Burlington City Arts; and Arts Alive Festival, sponsored by Arts Alive and VSA Vermont.

Home in the Arts — For the sixth consecutive year, Very Special Arts Vermont provides art opportunities for at-risk youth at the Committee on Temporary Shelter's Families in Transition Program in Burlington. Artistic initiatives are determined by the youth themselves and have a component of "giving back" to the community. Projects include substance abuse prevention theater performances and the making of murals by older youth mentors and younger children entering the social rehabilitation system. The Home in the Arts Project, New Visions Dance Project, and Start with the Arts are underwritten by a U.S. Department of Education Early Childhood Development Grant.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Vermont conducts the New Visions Dance Project with children and families who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, and/or who are residents of the Riverside Housing Project in Burlington. In addition, weekly dance workshops are held in Newport, St. Johnsbury and Rutland.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Vermont conducts the Start with the Arts program with children and families who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, and/or who are residents of the Riverside Housing Project in Burlington.

Westview Drama Program — Very Special Arts Vermont conducts a 16-week drama and storytelling program in the theater arts for 20 adult out-patients at the Westview House of the Howard Center for Human Services.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS VIRGINIA

Ms. Kay Smith
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Virginia
P.O. Box 29081
Richmond, VA 23242
Office: (804) 648-7310
Fax: (804) 643-2890
e-mail: vsava@ix.netcom.com

Bell Choir Programs — The Very Special Arts Virginia Bell Choir program offers children and adults with disabilities various levels of participation while striving for musical excellence within the bell choir tradition. Individual choirs hold one-hour weekly practice sessions, for 8-10 weeks. Each choir culminates with a public performance at locations such as the Governor's Mansion, churches, art fairs, shopping malls and libraries. Choir directors have degrees in music and experience directly bell choirs and working with people with disabilities. Fourteen individual choirs, with 175 participants are located in Richmond, Loudoun County, Lynchburg, Virginia Beach and Winchester.

da Vinci Project (1997 State Program Grant Recipient - 2nd Year) — Very Special Arts Virginia's da Vinci Project is a visual arts program that provides individuals with disabilities access to a professionally staffed and fully equipped arts studio. The studio is located in the Shockoe Bottom Arts Center, a Richmond arts center housing 60 artists studios and several large exhibition galleries. The da Vinci studio is open to participants four days a week, with three-hour workshops on Saturdays. Participants, who are selected through an application process, have opportunities to develop their artistic expression, exhibit and sell their work, and interact with each other and resident artists at the Center. VSA awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaborations with other community organizations.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,000 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Virginia festivals in the following locations: Virginia Beach, Reston, Winchester, and Harrisonburg, representing 10 days of artistic achievement.

Festival Theater — Very Special Arts Virginia offers opportunities for people with disabilities, their friends, and their families to perform together in integrated settings. Theater programs include both school-based initiatives and community-based initiatives. In Virginia Beach and Winchester County, in-school theater programs are supported by drama clubs and drama departments. In Loudoun County, a community-based theater program involves participants from age 3 to 60. Past productions include "The Wizard of Oz," "Alice in Wonderland," "Peter Pan," "Hansel and Gretel," "Grease," and "Around the World in Eighty Days" as well as two original productions written and directed by Alice Power, a former off-Broadway actress working with Very Special Arts Virginia-Loudoun County.

Gallery — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of artwork. The VSA Virginia Gallery is located in the Shockoe Bottom Arts Center, where the organization is based. The Center is Richmond's newest fully accessible arts and cultural center and attracts thousands of visitors to its monthly exhibits and special events. Exhibits feature paintings, photography, quilts and works in a variety of other media.

Mentor Program — Through Very Special Arts Virginia's Mentor Program, artists with disabilities are matched with mentors, who work with a facilitator to set educational goals and objectives in targeted areas. In the Mentor Program, artists with disabilities use the arts to sharpen their leisure and recreational skills, which are necessary precursors for gaining employment and maintaining relationships. Creative work from this program is displayed and/or performed at VSA Virginia-Virginia Beach events.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Since 1993, Very Special Arts Virginia's New Visions Dance Project has allowed participants to increase their physical strength and self-esteem, and has taught dance instructors adaptive techniques.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA Virginia facilitates a statewide call for entries and encourages young people with disabilities to submit scripts for national consideration.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. In 1996, VSA Virginia sent an art teacher from Richmond City Schools to the national Start with the Arts training institute in Florida, and in 1997 an artist and an early childhood professional from Loudoun County will attend a regional training institute.

Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute — The Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute, named for visual artist and Very Special Arts supporter Hiro Yamagata, is a comprehensive program focusing on the creative learning process in the arts. Each year, artists with disabilities from around the world are selected as Yamagata Fellows to spend a week together exchanging ideas and sharing adaptive techniques in the visual arts. This week is followed by collaborative programming in the Fellows' home states or countries. In 1996, Richmond jeweler Cathy Wheless was selected as one of two U.S. artists to serve as a Yamagata Fellow and has continued her involvement with VSA Virginia.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA Virginia distributes a statewide a call for entries and nominates one young soloist to represent the state at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS WASHINGTON

Mr. Dan Schmitt
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Washington
305 Harrison Street, #303
Seattle, WA 98109
Office: (206) 443-1843
Fax: (206) 448-9585
e-mail: vsawdes@aol.com

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Washington's artist residencies occur in schools, group homes, hospitals, and other facilities, reaching 1,500 children and 100 adults with and without disabilities. All residencies are conducted by professional artists who are experienced in working with students with disabilities. For 12 years, VSA Washington has made a unique contribution to the Washington State Arts Commission's Artist in Residence Program, working with students with all types of disabilities, ranging from mild to severe/profound, in self-contained classes, resource rooms, and mainstreamed programs.

Arts Enabled — Very Special Arts Washington is researching the current state of accessibility to the performing arts in King County for people with disabilities. The results of this research will be used to develop program measures that will improve and increase access. Documents will be produced for performing arts presenters and funding organizations that describe methods for providing quality arts access services. VSA Washington is conducting this program in collaboration with the Seattle Arts Commission, Arts for Visually Impaired Audiences (AVIA), and the Community Service Center For the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Findings from this program will be provided free of charge to presenters and funders in the King County area and will serve as a resource to arts presenters and grantors throughout the state.

District Development Program Phase II (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — Very Special Arts Washington is establishing up to eight new district committees by providing seed money grants for festivals or community-based art projects. This program also strengthens existing district committees by providing matching grant opportunities, technical assistance and program support. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 4,300 people directly participate in Very

Special Arts Washington festivals in the following locations: La Conner, Oroville, Othello, Port Townsend, Puyallup, Seattle, Tacoma, Wenatchee and Yakima.

Harrison Street Gallery — Very Special Arts galleries showcase the creative talents of professional and emerging artists with disabilities through exhibition and sale of art work. VSA Washington created a cooperative arrangement with the Seattle Center to staff the Harrison Street Gallery. The goals of this collaboration are to maintain a universally accessible art gallery year-round by creating a volunteer workforce to oversee the venue and to create a more accessible and public site for VSA Washington and its programs.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards Mentoring Grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. This year, Very Special Arts Washington is receiving training and guidance from VSA Massachusetts in the area of program development. VSA Washington will draw on VSA Massachusetts' experience in expanding teacher training workshops, creating accessibility resource materials, developing a community access monitor program, and improving the marketing of accessibility programs.

"No Boundaries" — Very Special Arts Washington presents the "No Boundaries" exhibit, featuring works by Pacific Northwest professional artists with disabilities. The juried exhibition is displayed at the Harrison Street Gallery in Seattle, then travels to sites throughout the state. The "No Boundaries" exhibit grand opening also features performances by artists with disabilities. This year, Deaf Moose Theater (featuring Helen Hayes Award-winner Howie Seago) and Florence Braxton-Raynor and Sisters in Song participated in the event. Ms. Braxton-Raynor was joined by a youth chorus, comprised of former members of the Seattle Public Housing Choir.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. Very Special Arts Washington, in collaboration with the Deaf Youth Drama Program at Seattle Children's Theatre, offers script writing workshops and mentors for Deaf students. Taught by playwrights and actors, the workshops allow students to write their own scripts, get feedback from mentors, and have staged readings of their scripts. Scripts are then submitted to the national Playwright Discovery Program for consideration. VSA Washington received a 1997 Playwright Discovery Program grant to conduct this project.

VSA/ITT Career Development Festivals — In conjunction with ITT Educational Services, Very Special Arts Washington coordinates two VSA/ITT Career Development Festival at the ITT Technical Institutes in the Seattle area. The result of a national partnership between Very Special Arts and ITT Educational Services, Inc., these festivals provide young adults with an introduction to the arts and also to careers in the field of technical services to help strengthen their career development skills. The events emphasize career readiness, job skills practice, and artistic expression. Workshops are conducted by professional visual and performing artists and teachers from the ITT Technical Institute campuses in Bothell and Tukwila.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. John Hunter
Executive Director
Very Special Arts West Virginia
Marshall University
400 Hal Greer Blvd.
Huntington, WV 25755
Office: (304) 696-6384
Fax: (304) 696-3232
e-mail: hunterj@marshall.edu

Art for Incarcerated Youth — Very Special Arts West Virginia, in cooperation with the State Department of Education, offers a visual arts program for the students of the West Virginia Industrial Home for Youth. The program was started in the spring of 1995 for 20 young men between the ages of 14 and 18. VSA West Virginia offers staff training, evaluation and curriculum guidance. The program is now integrated into the school curriculum and is offered during the regular school day.

Beyond Barriers — "Beyond Barriers" is an annual juried exhibition of artwork by adults with disabilities in West Virginia. Very Special Arts West Virginia co-sponsors this annual event with Shawnee Hills Mental Hospital Center. Calls for entries reach 600 adults with disabilities, and finalists have their work exhibited at the cultural centers at the State Capitol and eight other sites throughout the state.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,200 people directly participate in Very Special Arts West Virginia festivals in the following locations: Brooke County, Hancock County, Huntington, Institute, Morgantown, Ohio County, Webster Springs, and Wheeling, and Wetzell County.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance Project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. The Very Special Arts West Virginia New Visions Dance Project offers workshops in eight districts, including sites at the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center, Shawnee Hills Mental Hospital, local hospitals and other rehabilitation centers.

Organization of College and University Programs — Very Special Arts West Virginia continues to work towards bringing colleges and universities in West Virginia into a network of VSA West Virginia Centers. Sites currently involved include Marshall University, West Virginia University in Morgantown and Parkersburg, West Virginia State College and West Virginia Graduate College. Through this network, colleges and universities provide sites for workshops, festivals, meeting spaces, and faculty members as trainers and facilitators, and students as volunteers. In addition, VSA West Virginia provides instruction to college and university staff and students on accessibility and the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. This year, VSA West Virginia is producing two plays at the district level, and submitting one to represent the state at the national level.

Very Important Puppeteers — Very Special Arts West Virginia organizes, facilitates and sponsors collaborative puppetry workshops and performances. Using local themes and local writers, students and adults with disabilities develop and rehearse original musical puppetry performances, which then tour to Charlestown and Huntington, West Virginia, and to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The troupe from Lew County High School is comprised of students with and without disabilities and perform at district festivals in Huntington, Morgantown, Wheeling, Parkersburg and Institute

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year, VSA West Virginia distributes a statewide a call for entries and nominates one young soloist to represent the state at the national level.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS WISCONSIN

Ms. Kay Lindblade
President
Very Special Arts Wisconsin
4785 Hayes Road
Madison, WI 53704
Office/TTY: (608) 241-2131
Fax: (608) 241-1982
e-mail: vsawis@ix.netcom.com

Artist Residencies — Very Special Arts Wisconsin places professional artists at the elementary, middle and adult education levels, to serve over 1,200 people with and without disabilities. Art programs include dance, drama, creative writing, music and visual art.

Artist Training — Very Special Arts Wisconsin offers disability awareness training and workshops for 60-100 artists each year, on an ongoing basis.

Children's Collection Program — Very Special Arts Wisconsin's Children's Collection celebrates the talents and abilities of children with disabilities by showcasing their visual artwork. Each year, children with disabilities throughout the state participate in workshops and art programs and submit their artwork to be selected for inclusion in the collection. The Children's Art Collection now contains 32 works by children with disabilities and tours to sites throughout the state.

Disability Awareness Training — Very Special Arts Wisconsin facilitates disability awareness training for arts and education professionals. Current issues, such as access and inclusion, are highlighted at regularly scheduled meetings which are conducted by accessibility experts.

Drama Program (1997 State Program Grant Recipient) — The Very Special Arts Wisconsin drama program serves middle school and high school students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Trained professional artists conduct ten sessions to teach creative drama skills, culminating in a showcase performance. The drama program expands the capabilities, confidence and quality of life for students with disabilities, and assists students in developing their interpersonal and communications skills. Very Special Arts awards State Program Grants to VSA state affiliates to encourage the creation of innovative arts programs for people with disabilities, with a focus on collaboration with other community organizations.

Earl and Eugina Quirk Foundation Scholarship — The Earl and Eugina Quirk Foundation Scholarship encourages graduating high school seniors with disabilities to further develop their artistic abilities. Very Special Arts Wisconsin distributes application information to high schools and colleges statewide in November. Three judges select four recipients in April, who are then notified and receive scholarship funds.

Early Childhood Program — Entering its fifth year, the Early Childhood Program encourages the use of the arts as an educational tool to promote the development of social, cognitive and physical abilities in preschool students. The program includes intensive training for 200 educators in the use of adaptive and inclusive arts techniques, along with hands-on arts opportunities for the children through visiting artists sessions. The Early Childhood Program is conducted in Kansasville, La Crosse, Madison, Wausau, Union Grove, Ringle and Janesville, involving more than 600 children with and without disabilities.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 5,700 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Wisconsin festivals in the following locations: Antigo, Appleton, Fon du Lac, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Platteville, Sheboygan, Stevens Point, St. Francis, Sun Prairie, Superior and Union Grove.

Marching Band Program — More than 300 high school students and young adults with disabilities are matched with members of their high school bands as "peer coaches" to practice weekly in local schools. On Very Special Saturday, participants join the University of Wisconsin Band in a performance at a Big Ten football game. This program showcases musical accomplishments and promotes integrated music programs in high schools. Very Special Arts Wisconsin Choirs and dance programs also participate in Very Special Saturday.

Mentoring Program — Very Special Arts awards Mentoring Grants to executive directors of Very Special Arts state affiliates to provide an opportunity to learn from the strengths of fellow directors and to develop a forum for the sharing of programming and organizational ideas. This year, Very Special Arts Wisconsin is providing training and guidance to Very Special Arts Michigan in the areas of board development, fundraising and strategic planning in 1997. Through the assistance of VSA Wisconsin, VSA Michigan is expanding its board and staff and planning comprehensive fundraising strategies.

New Visions Dance Project — The New Visions Dance project introduces people with disabilities to the art of dance and creative movement. The project involves people of all ages and with all types of disabilities in dance workshops and classes. As part of the project, professional dance instructors receive training in adaptive techniques for inducing students with disabilities in their classes. Very Special Arts Wisconsin offers two distinct dance programs, one for adults with disabilities, and one for children with and without disabilities. Participants celebrate their accomplishments at Very Special Arts Wisconsin festivals.

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Permanent Collection — Very Special Arts Wisconsin purchases the artwork of emerging Wisconsin adult artists with disabilities (ages 16 and older) for inclusion in a Permanent Collection. A statewide call for art is distributed each year, works are juried, and selected works are purchased by the organization to become part of this traveling collection.

Very Special Arts Wisconsin Choirs — Very Special Arts Wisconsin sponsors 11 choirs, serving in the communities of Fon du Lac, Appleton, Green Bay, Madison, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Portage, Stevens Point, Stoughton and Viroqua. Participants meet regularly to rehearse in a variety of settings, such as schools and community centers. Choir members share their accomplishments at VSA Wisconsin festivals and events, reaching an audience of more than 100,000 people each year.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS WYOMING

Ms. Judie Herz
Executive Director
Very Special Arts Wyoming
P.O. Box 2170
Mills, WY 82644
Office: (307) 237-8618
Fax: (307) 237-1151
e-mail: spclart@trib.com

Family Days Conference — Very Special Arts Wyoming co-sponsors a state-wide Family Days Conference for educators, professionals, service providers, and parents of children who are deaf or hearing impaired. At the conference, VSA Wyoming also provides hands-on workshops in the visual arts, dance and music.

Festivals — Very Special Arts Festivals are community-based celebrations that showcase participants in Very Special Arts programs across the United States. Festivals feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops, where children, youth and adults with disabilities proudly share their accomplishments with the public. Over 2,100 people directly participate in Very Special Arts Wyoming festivals in the following locations: Cheyenne, Jackson, Lander, Laramie and Mills. These festivals reach an additional audience of over 20,000 people.

Kids-on-the-Block — Kids-on-the-Block is an educational performance that utilizes puppet characters with and without disabilities to help children learn about disabilities. The show promotes open attitudes, explodes myths and misconceptions, and stresses that we are all unique individuals with a variety of skills. The show also encourages children to ask questions and talk about disabilities. The Kids-on-the-Block puppets travel the state continuously, performing and educating on disabilities at grade schools, camps, and other facilities. Over 10,000 people with and without disabilities participate in Kids-on-the-Block performances and discussions each year.

Mega Conference — Very Special Arts Wyoming, in partnership with the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, Wynot, Nowcap, WILR, and Easter Seals, present a state-wide conference for educators, professional, service providers, and parents of children with disabilities. The ultimate conference of disabilities, Mega Conference invites individuals and groups from across the state to present on various disability topics, programs, resources and technological aids and tools. At the conference, VSA Wyoming sponsors exhibits, art workshops, speakers, and performances.

Playwright Discovery Program — The Very Special Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites individuals with disabilities, ages 25 and under, to submit a play that explores the theme and dimensions of disability. One play in each age category (18 and under; 19-25) will be selected for production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Award recipients will receive scholarship funds and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the production. A Teacher's Guide is available that provides theater exercises and disability awareness information for the classroom. VSA Wyoming facilitates a call for entries to high schools, junior colleges and universities throughout the state. One young playwright is selected to represent the state at the national level.

Start with the Arts — Start with the Arts is an instructional program for four-, five- and six-year olds that uses the arts to assist young children in exploring themes commonly taught in early childhood classrooms. The program develops basic literary skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can use with young children with and without disabilities. Parents are provided with resources to continue their children's learning at home. Very Special Arts Wyoming sponsors Start with the Arts workshops and training for 1,300 children with and without disabilities and 60 educators throughout the state.

Young Soloists Program — The Very Special Arts Young Soloists Program annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects two award recipients to receive scholarship funds and to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Panasonic Young Soloists Award is generously sponsored by Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. Each year VSA Wyoming conducts a call for submissions and a juried review process to nominate a finalist to represent VSA Wyoming at the national level.

CROSS-REFERENCED INDEX OF PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Accessibility Clearinghouse

Colorado
District of Columbia
Hawaii
Illinois
Indiana
Maine
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
New Jersey
Ohio
Oregon
Rhode Island
Washington
Wyoming

Accessibility Training

Colorado
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Maine
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York City
Oregon
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Utah
Vermont
Washington
Wisconsin

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Indiana
Massachusetts
New York City
Ohio
Rhode Island
Minnesota

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Illinois
Missouri
Utah

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Chicago
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Indiana
Louisiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Mexico
Oregon
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Utah
Washington
Wisconsin

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Indiana

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Alaska
Colorado
District of Columbia
Maine
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
New Mexico
Ohio
South Dakota
Texas
Virginia

Exhibitions

Almost all Very Special Arts affiliates sponsor art exhibitions

Galleries

Alabama
Arizona
California
Connecticut
District of Columbia
Florida
Illinois
Kansas
Utah
Virginia
Washington

Mini-Grant Programs

Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Massachusetts
Oregon

ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:

Murals Programs

Arizona
Nebraska
Nevada
New York City
Vermont

Scholarship Programs

Colorado
Iowa
Maryland
Nevada
Wisconsin

Teacher Training

California
Connecticut
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Nebraska
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York City
North Carolina
Oregon
Utah
Virginia
Washington

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Alabama
Hawaii
Illinois
Iowa
New Hampshire
Oregon

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Alaska
Chicago
Florida
Illinois
Maine
Missouri
Montana
New Jersey
New Mexico
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Oregon
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Vermont
Wisconsin

Dance

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Chicago
Colorado
Connecticut
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
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Missouri
Montana
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York City
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Oregon
Rhode Island
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

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Florida
Georgia
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Indiana
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Nebraska
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New Jersey
New Mexico
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New York City
North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
South Carolina
Utah
Virginia
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Photography
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Montana
Nebraska
North Carolina
Oregon

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Hawaii
Iowa
New York City
Oregon
South Carolina
Vermont
West Virginia
Wyoming

Video/Arts & Technology
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Washington

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VERY SPECIAL ARTS NATIONAL PROGRAMS:

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Alabama
Florida
Illinois
Maine
New Hampshire
Ohio

Festivals
All Very Special Arts affiliates conduct festivals.

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Connecticut
Kentucky
Mississippi
New Jersey
New York-Buffalo
New York City
Oklahoma

Mentoring Grants
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District of Columbia
Massachusetts
Michigan
Utah
Washington
Wisconsin

Native American Initiative
Minnesota
Oklahoma

New Visions Dance Project
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Hawaii
Idaho
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Iowa
Missouri
Montana
New Jersey
North Carolina
Rhode Island
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
West Virginia
Wisconsin

Playwright Discovery Program
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Georgia
Idaho
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Missouri
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wyoming

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District of Columbia
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Nevada
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New York-Buffalo
Oregon
Rhode Island
Vermont (2)
Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin

Start with the Arts
Alabama
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Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Minnesota
Mississippi
Nebraska
New Mexico
North Carolina
Ohio
Vermont
Virginia
Wyoming

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NATIONAL PROGRAMS, CONT'D.:

VA/Very Special Arts Program

California
Connecticut
Delaware
Illinois
Kansas
Maryland
Mississippi
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Mexico
New York City
Oklahoma
Oregon
South Carolina

VSA/ITT Career Development Festivals

Florida
Idaho
Indiana
Michigan
New Mexico
Oregon
Washington

Yamagata International Visual Arts Institute

Oregon
Virginia

Young Soloists Program

Alabama
Delaware
Florida
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Maryland
Michigan
Missouri
Nebraska
New Jersey
New Mexico
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Virginia
West Virginia
Wyoming

VERY
SPECIAL
ARTS®

1300 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
(800) 933-8721 • FAX (202) 737-0725 • TTY (202) 737-0645

Very Special Arts is an affiliate of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts